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THE *KIRĀTĀRJUNĪYAM*
OR
"ARJUNA'S PENANCE"
IN
INDIAN ART

By

T. N. RAMACHANDRAN.

INTRODUCTION

No country in the world rose to the pinnacle of eminence that had not *Art* as the real force prompting its growth and civilization. And the "glory that was Ind" is indeed the reconstituted result obtained by a careful and scientific study of a few relics of India's ancient treasures that, defying age and age-long neglect, have luckily come down to us. Religion and Literature including Poetry, found in Art (sculpture and painting) a never-failing and pleasant agent. The architects, sculptors and painters of Ancient India were supplied by great poets, authors and theologians themes drawn from ancient lore, myths, religious and popular or classical literature which they could translate into stone or canvas. So true has been such a "translation" in some cases, as for example, the *Lalita Vistara* in Bharhut, Bodh-Gayā, Gāndhāra and Sāñcī *Stūpas* and Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddha-carita* and *Saundarananda Kāvya* in the representation of the life of the Buddha in the *stūpas* of Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Guntur District, (Andhra State), that one wonders which is the cause or which is the effect, who is the author or which is the product. Sometimes this wonder leads chroniclers to debate *inter-alia* seriously whether the dates of some great poets and standard authors need revision in the light of plastic representations of their themes, poems or dramas. Of the many instances known to modern research, the dates of Kālidāsa, Aśvaghoṣa, Bhāravi and the *Devī-Bhāgavata* are a few pertinent to our point. The Bhīṭā medallion with its so-called scene of Duṣyanta meeting Śakuntalā in Kaṇvāśrama,[1] the Rāṇi Nūr cave frieze with a hunting king (Duṣyanta?)

[1] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1911-12, *Excavations at Bhiṭā*, pl. XXIII, 17 and pl. XXIV; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, Sir John Marshall, "The Monuments of Ancient India", pl. XXIX, 81.

approaching on the heel of a running deer, an *āśrama*, where abandoning hunt he enters peacefully the *āśrama* and beholds Śakuntalā (?) watching him from a tree,' while the chased deer is again shown this time near its mistress suggesting its immunity as an "āśrama-mṛga" (*āśrama-mṛgo na hantavyo na hantavyo*), and the Bhuvaneśwar frieze depicting the advent of Kumāra as a veritable translation into stone of Kālidāsa's famous verse in the 9th *sarga* of his "Kumāra Saṁbhava"[2] are some high roads, nay beacon-lights which illumine the disputed problem of Kālidāsa's date. Similarly scenes relating to the Buddha's life and the conversion of Buddha's foster-brother Nanda, occurring on the rail of Amarāvatī *stūpa* attributed to Nāgārjuna, and at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, a seat of Nāgarjuna's later activities, make us gape with wonder if they inspired Aśvaghoṣa into his classical poetry (*Buddha-carita* and *Saundaranaṁda Kāvya*) or was Aśvaghoṣa their author, of course through the agency of a master-artist of skill and ingenuity. The advent of the celestial nymph Urvaśī in the Nara-Nārāyana relief from Deogarh [redacted] the early 6th century A.D. and the complete and satisfactory explanation of its details by a reference to the *Devī-Bhāgavata* (*Skandha* 4, *adhyāyas* 5-10) are two mutually complementary contributions, the one (former) acquiring interpretation and the other (latter) the lowest limit of its date.[3]

The third problem relates to poet Bhāravi, his date, his immortal poem *Kirātārjunīyam* and its appeal both to the poet and the artist of India. It is no exaggeration to state that Bhāravi's poetic description of the "Kirāta's (Śiva's) feud with Arjuna"[4] found special favour in South India, particularly in the Pallava Kingdom, when Siṁhaviṣṇu and after him Mahendravarman I (600-640 A.D.) ruled over a large kingdom with Kāñcīpuram as their capital, Māmallapuram (Mahābalipuram) as their port and the Telugu country in the north upto Vijayawāḍa included in their kingdom. As

[1] *J. I. S. O. A.*, Calcutta, 1945, Vol. XIV, pp. 108-9; T. N. Ramachandran & Chhotelal Jain, *Khaṇḍagiri-Udayagiri Caves*, p. 9.

[2] Yugāntakālāgnimivā=vishahyaṁ parichyutam Manmatha-raṅgabhaṅgāt |
Ratāntaretas=Sa Hiraṇyaretas=yathorddhvaretās-tadamoghamādhāt ||
Kālidāsa, *Kumāra Saṁbhava*, 9th *sarga*, v. 14.

[3] *I. H. Q.*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 191-6.

[4] The Pallava King Mahendravarman I (610A.C.) alludes to "the Kirāta's feud with Arjuna" in his farce *Mattavilāsa*, the significance of which is explained in T. N. Ramachandran, *The Royal Artist Mahendravarman I* (J. O. R., Vol. VII, part III), pp. 315-320.

Bhāravi plays a great part in our correct appreciation of Indian art in general and of Pallava Art in particular we can do no better than describe the circumstances that led to the creation of the classical poem *Kirātārjunīyam*, its popularity and its ready adoption by the artists, sculptors and painters of South India in general and by the court of the Pallava in particular.

The Kirātārjuniyam

The basic theme relating to "Arjuna's penance" or the "Kirāta's feud with Arjuna" is found in the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*.[1] Bhāravi appears to be the first Sanskrit poet to use this theme for drawing up his immortal poem *Kirātārjunīyam*. It is strange that this fascinating theme and story is not dealt with by Kālidāsa[2]; not that he knew it not but perhaps the themes of his works that have come down to us were then popular or the order of the day. From sculptures of the Gupta times to which Kālidāsa is assigned we know that *Kumāra-saṁbhava* or the birth of Kārtikeya, *Tripura-vijaya*, *Kāma-dahana* and Arjuna's penance on the side of Śaivite Iconography,[3] and Gajendra-Mokṣa, Anantaśayana and Nara-Nārāyaṇa associated with Vaiṣṇavite Iconography[4] were some of the popular themes of poetry and lore that artists immortalised in stone. In fact the story of Arjuna finds its due share along with *Kāma-dahana* and *Kumāra-Saṁbhava* occurring on three pillar fragments from Candimau (Rajaona) in Bihar of the Gupta period of the 5th century A.D. (Pl. I, a—c). Hence this story also was popular under the Guptas, though Kālidāsa did not utilise it. And Bhāravi who followed, filled up this want and gave us the *Kirātārjunīyam*, which opened as it were the flood-gates of contemporaneous sculpture and painting. Anantabhaṭṭa of later times dealt with

[1] *Arjunābhigamana parva*, *Kairāta parva* and *Indralokagamana parva*.

[2] The author of *Kumāra Sambhava*, *Raghuvaṁśa*, *Meghasandeśa*, *Ṛitusaṁhāra*, *Vikramorvaśīya*, *Mālavikāgni-mitra* and *Abhijñāna-Śākuntala*, *etc.*

[3] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1911-12, pp. 162-6.

[4] Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 1930, pls. 48, 49 ; *I. H. Q.*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 191-6.

the same story in the style of his period (15th century A.D.)[1] in a *campū* (prose and poetry) called *Bhārata-Campū*.

The Mahābhārata version

The *Mahābhārata* version of the story may now be referred to as every other version including Bhāravi's appears to be indebted to it, in regard to the rudiments of the event. When the Pāṇḍava brothers were in exile and in distress in Dvaitavana, Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana (Vyāsa) visited them and advised Yudhisthira (*pratismṛti*) who in turn advised arjuna to meet Indra. At the request of his brother, Arjuna went north, armed with his bow and sword and with the resolve to perform austerities and propitiate Indra so that the latter may be pleased and help him to remove the disgrace inflicted on him, his brothers and their wife Draupadī. Repairing to the Himalayan forest in the north he subjected himself to harsh austerities on the Indrakīla hill. Indra came to him first as an old ascetic and engaging him in an interesting catechism asked him if *mokṣa* was the end or aim of Arjuna's austerities (*tapas*). On Arjuna's replying that his *tapas* was to enable him to secure weapons (*astras*) with which he could wipe off their shame and disgrace by defeating their enemies, the Kauravas, Indra revealed to him his form as the lord of the Suras (*Surapati*) and asked him to concentrate his *tapas* on the worship of Śiva, the God of all Gods[2], and that Arjuna could have Indra's weapons thereafter.

Thereupon Arjuna started another course of penance, the severest of its kind. Clad in *valkala* or tree bark, his bed formed by grass (*kuśa*), wearing deer-skin, and holding a shaft (*daṇḍa*), he lived on dry leaves and fallen fruits. In the first month of his penance he lived on fruits every third night, in the second month every sixth night. In the third month he took food once in 15 days and in the fourth once a month. During the intense period of his penance he stood on one foot or on the tip of the toe of one foot, with his arms raised over his head. Starvation reduced him to a

[1] Ananta Bhaṭṭa is of uncertain date; 15th century according to some, a date earlier than the 15th century according to others and one in the 11th century A.D. according to T. Krishnamacharya are the alternative dates suggested for this writer.

[2] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, XXXVI, vv. 49-58.

skeleton and the beard and the shaggy hair made him appear like Sūrya surrounded by rays. The sages who lived in the forest were perturbed by Arjuna's penance, as heated with his effort (*tapas*) the earth was emitting smoke. They could not understand why a hero (*vīra*) like Arjuna with bow and arrow, etc., should resort to austerities which were clearly a *munivṛtti*. They went to Śiva (Mahādeva) in the Himālayas (it must be noted that Arjuna is performing the penance in the Himalayan forest) and expressing to him their displeasure and uneasiness at Arjuna's austerities requested Mahādeva to put an end to his, *i.e.* Arjuna's *tapas*. Śiva (*Śarva*) assured them that they need not be afraid of Arjuna's austerities, that he (Arjuna) desired no kingdom or heaven or wealth or long life, that he (Śiva) alone knew what Arjuna wanted, which he would grant him.

As soon as the sages, thus assured, departed, Śiva (Hara) accompanied by his consort Umā, both dressed in *Kirāta-veṣa* or dress of hunters living in forests, and followed by many merry goblins (*bhūta-gaṇas*) of various forms and attires and by thousands of female goblins also in a variety of guises and dresses, reached the place where Arjuna stood in penance.[1] And suddenly the sounds of springs and waterfalls, animals and birds ceased and sepulchral silence pervaded the forest. As they approached him they saw that Arjuna's penance was disturbed by a Dānava called Mūka who assuming the form of a wild boar was rushing at the emaciated figure of Arjuna.[2] Arjuna had his doubt for a second whether he could take to arms while he was in the midst of a *vrata*, and consoling himself with the plea (which he speaks out by addressing the boar) that he can kill the demon (Asura) in self-defence more so as the demon wanted to kill him (Arjuna) who had done the former no harm, he got ready to shoot his arrow at the boar.[3] Just then Śiva appeared before him as the *Kirāta*, and pointing out to him the procedure in a law of hunt asked Arjuna to desist as he (Śiva) had marked the animal out for his own arrow-shot, even before Arjuna espied it. Arjuna turned a deaf ear to the *Kirāta's* sermon on hunt, and shot his arrow. Simultaneously the *Kirāta* also shot; the boar fell down shot dead after revealing the real form of the *Asura*.

[1] *Ibid.*, XXXIX, vv. 1-6.
[2] *Ibid.*, v. 7.
[3] The *Smṛtis* say that even a cow can be killed in self-defence if it rushes to kill.

Thereupon an interesting wordy as well as physical duel ensued between the *Kirāta* and Arjuna. Arjuna sneered at the *Kirāta* being surrounded by his women in the forest and asked him if he was not afraid of the forest. The *Kirāta* answered that they were forest-dwellers and hence there was no question of fear. In return he wanted to know why Arjuna was roaming in the forest and alone. Arjuna gave him his characteristic answer that his *gāṇḍīva* and arrows were ever there to protect him. Then accusing the *Kirāta* of a severe breach of the rules of hunting in that he shot the boar which was attacking him (Arjuna) he challenged the *Kirāta* to answer such conduct with his life. The *Kirāta* levelled a counter-accusation against Arjuna in this way, "I was after the boar, which was my game and prey. It was killed by my arrow. You take away my prey, accuse me of taking away your prey, yet talk of rules of hunt and want me to answer with my life. So be it, I shall end your life." Arjuna was angry, and shot arrow after arrow at the *Kirāta* who caught with ease all the arrows with his hands. Thereupon Arjuna cried in wonder,—"Who are you?—a Deva, Yakṣa, Rudra, Sura or Asura? Now let me see how you can stand the arrows (*nārācas*) from my *Gāṇḍīva*, which only Śiva can withstand". No sooner did Arjuna shoot his arrows than they were caught by Śiva and Arjuna's stock of arrows was soon depleted. Deprived of arrows Arjuna smote the *Kirāta* with the bow. The *Kirāta* snatched the bow away from Arjuna. Then Arjuna attacked the *Kirāta* with the sword but Arjuna's luck fell and his sword broke.[1]

The next stage in the duel found Arjuna throwing stones, trees and other kinds of missiles at the *Kirāta* who caught them easily and proved more than a match to Arjuna. The last stage in the duel was to wrestle and use the fists. The two wrestled till such time as Arjuna fell unconscious, bleeding and bruised.[2] Recovering consciousness, Arjuna was overwhelmed with sorrow at his defeat. It flashed to Arjuna's mind that his foe was not a mortal and he immediately darted up and making a clay *sthaṇḍila* or altar of Śiva (the wielder of the *pināka*) he began to worship Bhava (Śiva). To his surprise all the garlands and flowers that he put on the clay altar

[1] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, Ch. XXXIX, vv. 8-53.

[2] *Ibid.*, vv. 53-68.

(*sthaṇḍila*) of Śiva were found moving to the head of the *Kirāta*. Arjuna forthwith fell at the *Kirāta's* feet and begged his pardon for *Śivāparādha* and the fight he gave him out of ignorance, not knowing that the Lord for whose blessings he was performing austerities, was before him to bless him.[1] Śiva was pleased and revealed his form with Pārvatī as Kailāsanātha to bless his *bhakta*, assuring Arjuna as "In your former life you were a great sage, Nara, the friend of Nārāyaṇa. I give you godly eyes (*divya-cakṣus*) now to behold me"[2]. Arjuna poured out his heart in a volley of *stotras* in praise of the Lord Mahādeva, who gave him the weapon he desired, *viz.*, *pāśupatāstra*, and vanished.[3] Soon after other Devas and *Dikpālas*, the guardians of the quarters (Indra, Varuṇa, Kubera and others) visited Arjuna and gave him their own special weapons.[4]

After they had gone, Arjuna thought of Indra's chariot and lo! it was there with Mātali, Indra's charioteer. Mātali approaching him conveyed to him Indra's desire that Arjuna should visit him in Indraloka first for the celestials to see him before going back to Dharmaputra. This was what Arjuna himself wanted to do as he owed everything to Indra (his sire) whose advice he followed to the letter. After bathing in the Gaṅgā and purifying himself he mounted Indra's chariot and went to Indraloka.[5] His grand reception in Indraloka, Indra giving him half of his seat during the celestial reception, Urvaśī dancing before Arjuna, her pride and conceit that none could resist her charms, Indra's desire to curb her pride and his commission to her to wait on Arjuna and please him, Urvaśī's frantic efforts to tempt Arjuna with her charms, Arjuna's knowledge of her birth from Nārāyaṇa's thigh and his own Nara-stage in the Nara-Nārāyaṇa life[6] and his refusal to yield to Urvaśī's attractions because of his respect to her due among various reasons to the fact that she was to him the "mother of the Puru dynasty", the discomfited and vain Urvaśī getting wild and cursing

[1] *Mahābhārata*, *Vana parva*, Ch. XXXIX, vv. 64-73.

[2] *Ibid.*, ch. XXXIX, v. 70.

[3] *Ibid.*, ch. XL, vv. 15, 27, 28.

[4] *Ibid.*, ch. XLI, vv. 5-49.

[5] *Ibid.*, (*Indralokagamana parva*) ch. XLII, vv. 11-20.

[6] T. N. Ramachandran, *Fresh light on the Deogarh relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa*, (*J. H. Q.*, Calcutta. Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 191-6).

Arjuna with impotence, an infliction which later on set on Arjuna and made him the impotent Brihannaḷā amidst the women of Virāṭa's court during the incognito-exile (अज्ञातवास) of the Pāṇḍava brothers, are the most interesting events in the subsequent career of Arjuna. They have as we shall see presently an explanatory bearing on some of the sculptures representing the story of Arjuna's penance.[1]

Now that we know the earliest version of the story from the Mahābhārata, it will be easy to examine Bhāravi's version and study in its light the plastic representations of the story of Arjuna's penance.

The date of Bhāravi

The date of Mahākavi Bhāravi, author of the poem *Kirātārjunīya* is known from an inscription from Aihole dated Śaka 556 (634-35 A.D.) of the Cālukya King Pulakeśi II[2] in which Bhāravi is classed with Kālidāsa and both are referred to as great poets. The verse is quoted here in view of its importance:

"..Sa vijayatāṁ Ravikīrtiḥ
Kavitāśrita=Kālidāsa=Bhāravi=kīrtiḥ"

Daṇḍin, author of *Daśakumāra-carita* and *Kāvyādarśa* was, according to Mādhavācārya, an younger contemporary of Bāṇa, who flourished in Harṣavardhana's court. It would appear that Bāna was a younger contemporary of Bhāravi.

The circumstances that led to the wide-spread popularity of the *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi can be made out from certain historical details. Fresh light is thrown on them by two Sanskrit manuscripts *Avanti-sundarī-kathā* and *Avanti-sundarī-kathāsāra*. These two manuscripts treat of contemporaneous Eastern Cālukya, Gaṅga and Pallava history.[3] The former is in prose with a poetic introduction and the latter is a summary in verse of the former. The prose work is by Daṇḍin, who gives his own ancestry in

[1] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, ch. XLVI, vv. 1-50.

[2] *Ep. Ind.*, vol. VI, pp. 3-7.

[3] Published in 1924 in the *Dakshinabhārati Series* No. 3, by Pandits S. K. Ramanatha Sastri and Ramakrishna Kavi.

which Bhāravi finds a place. According to the *Avanti-sundarī-kathā* in its transcript in the Trivandrum Curator's Office, Dr. V. Raghavan gives the following account of the historical material about Bhāravi and Daṇḍin's ancestor Dāmodara[1] :—

A Brāhmaṇa family of the Kauśika-gotra migrated from Ānandapura in Āryadeśa to Acalapura (modern Ellichpur in Central India) where Dāmodara was born to a Nārāyaṇa (Svāmin). Viṣṇuvardhana of the Cālukya *vaṁśa*[2] was then the *Yuvarāja* and poet Bhāravi was his friend. Bhāravi and Dāmodara were great friends. Through Bhāravi, Dāmodara established friendship with the Yuvarāja. Once Dāmodara had to accompany Yuvarāja Viṣṇuvardhana in the latter's hunts (*mṛgayā*), in one of which he was forced to eat meat with his royal friend for which sin he, as a *brāhmaṇa*, felt so ashamed and guilty that he went out on a pilgrimage as an expiation (*prāyaścitta*). While on pilgrimage, destiny brought him into contact with another prince of similar literary and poetic bent of mind. Yuvarāja Durvinīta of the Western Gaṅga line, who was exiled by his father, became his friend. Dāmodara was 20 years of age when he came to Durvinīta.[3] The Gaṅga prince Durvinīta is known to have written a commentary on Bhāravi's Kirātārjunīya (the 15th *sarga*) as revealed by some Gaṅga inscriptions.[4]

Dāmodara's fame reached the ears of the Pallava King Siṁhaviṣṇu (600 A.D.), the father of Mahendravarman I, who invited him to his court at Kāñcī, gave him all comforts and treated him like his son.[5] Siṁhaviṣṇu died soon after, and was succeeded by Mahendravarman I who developed into a royal poet and artist[6] and won for himself a place in the history of India as "one of the greatest figures in the history of Tamilian civilisation".[7] The fact that Dāmodara, friend of Bhāravi, migrated to the Gaṅga

[1] See Dr. V. Raghavan, *New Catalogue Catalogorum*, vol. I, pp. 808-810.

[2] Viṣṇuvardhana, also called Kubja Viṣṇuvardhana, was Pulakeśiś brother, and founded the Eastern Cālukya dynasty.

[3] *Avanti-sundari-kathā*, p. 7—line 2—*Viṁśati-varṣadeśiyaḥ*.

[4] *4th All-India Oriental Conference Proceedings*, 1927, pp. 44-46.

[5] *Avanti-sundarī-kathā*, p. 7.—*Putrīkaraṇeṇa*.

[6] See T. N. Ramachandran, *The royal artist Mahendravarman I*, in *J.O.R.* Madras, vol. VII. part III, p. 246.

[7] J. Dubreuil, *Pallavas*, p. 40.

and Pallava courts, explains the vogue that, through him, the *Kirātārjunīya* had spread all over the Deccan and South India, from Aihole to Mahābalipuram and Tanjore; it explains Durvinīta's tribute to Bhāravi in a literary commentary and Mahendravarman's commentary on the Kirātārjunīya in stone.

The narrative also tells that Dāmodara had a son called Manoratha, whose fourth son was one Vīradatta, to whom Daṇḍin was born.[1] Daṇḍin was a younger contemporary of Bāṇa, the court-poet of the famous Harṣavardhana of Kānyakubja.

Bhāravi and Mahendravarman I

On the invitation of a great sculptor Lalitālaya, Daṇḍin went to Mahāmallapura (Mahābalipuram) and witnessed the skill of the sculptor who had joined the broken hand of the image of Anantaśayana (Viṣṇu on the serpent) without there being any trace of the joint. This image is described to be near the sea. Surely, there is a reference in this to the *Shore Pagoda* at Mahābalipuram near Madras. And the place Mahāmallapura and the image of Anantaśayana (Mukunda) are referred to in the work as of common knowledge. The fact that Daṇḍin is invited to witness the skill of the sculptor is significant. As Daṇḍin was the Court-poet at the Pallava court and as he had the legacy of his great-grandfather Dāmodara who was probably associated in some form or other with the erection of either temples or the carving of sculptures at Mahāmallapuram, Daṇḍin as a representative of the family to which belonged Dāmodara had probably to supply the architects and the sculptors themes from ancient myths and lore which they could translate into stone. Dāmodara was probably similarly engaged by Mahendravarman. It should not surprise us therefore that the first theme that suggested itself to Dāmodara or to the king himself was the glorious theme of his friend's *Kirātārjunīya*, which was then a classic, spoken of by every one, and was so very popular that it was commented upon by Durvinīta! The *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi had won for him the unique honour of being ranked with Kālidāsa himself as revealed

[1] Gopalan, *Pallavas of Kāñcī*, p. 229.

by the Aihole inscription dated Śaka 556. Such an honour undoubtedly indicates that Bhāravi was indeed the poet of the day, loved by Cālukya Viṣṇuvardhana who was ruling probably at Ellichpur, admired by the Western Gaṅga Durvinīta who drank the nectar of the poet's classic *Kirātārjunīya* as manifested by his commentary on the poet's work, and treasured by King Mahendravarman I of an equally poetic and artistic bent of mind. It should not surprise us therefore to find the king devising means by which he could perpetuate the glorious theme of Bhāravi's immortal prize-classic. To the "Vicitracitta" as Mahendravarman was called nothing else but the rock would suggest itself. He probably took the poet to Mahāmallapuram,[1] and gave the poet the deserved honour of carving in his presence the theme of Kirātārjunīya so that the glory that was Bhāravi's could go from the word of mouth to permanent stone. Such then is indeed the explanation of the carving at Mahāmallapuram. The authorship of this can certainly go to Mahendravarman I (600-640) rather than to his son Narasiṁhavarman I (640-74) in the absence of evidence pointing towards the latter view held by some writers, and in the light of the interpretation given above.

This receives confirmation from the presence of caves in Mahāmallapuram, such as the *Varāha Cave* which contains portraits of Siṁhaviṣṇu and Mahendravarman and were probably carved by Mahendravarman himself. That Mahendravarman had no religious fanaticism nor did he share the persecuting zeal of a religious fanatic is borne testimony to in the first place by Yuan Chwang's account of Kāñcīpuram, secondly by the nature of the cave-temples built by him, such as Sittannavāsal dedicated to the Jaina Gods, Mahendravāḍi dedicated to Viṣṇu, Maṇḍagapaṭṭu dedicated to Trimurti and several others dedicated to Śiva, and thirdly by his carved presence with family in the Cave temple at Mahābalipuram dedicated to the *Varāha avatāra* of Viṣṇu, and by his declaration in the Māmaṇḍur inscription that he was carrying out "the mandate of God Narasiṁha (Viṣṇu), as dark as thousands of clouds, with head bent low with devotion to the god".

[1] Probably the Pallava port from where later on in the time of his son Narasiṁhavarman I a fleet was fitted out to sail for Ceylon to help Mānavarmma against the usurper Hattha-Datta II. Dr. Dubreuil has proved in his *Pallavas*, (p. 41) that this place was the naval station for the Pallava fleet. The place serves as a landmark for ships even now like Negapatam further south.

The occurrence of yet another crude carving on the rock at Mahāmallapuram can be explained as a rough trial plan or sketch designed by Mahendravarman earlier than the great relief composition but dropped either because of a technical flaw or lack of fidelity to the original, or else it may be a later copy of that well-executed relief relegated to less-skilled hands, betraying a decadence of Pallava art[1] that could not have set in either in the time of Mahendra or of his nobler son Narasimha even. It could have been carved at a later period in Pallava history, probably after 700 A.D.

The Contents of Bhāravi's Kirātārjunīyam

Mallinātha, the author of a commentary called Ghanṭāpatha on *"Kirātārjunīyam"* of Bhāravi calls Bhāravi a "Mahākavi" and his work a *Mahākāvya.* The poem consists of 18 *sargas.* The first *sarga* concerns with *vyavasāyadipana* or the consolation and encouragement that Dharmaputra received from a Brahmacārin (*varṇiliṅgī*) hunter (*vanecara*) in Dvaitavana during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas. The *Mahābhārata* gives his name as Mārkaṇḍeya. News of the prosperity of the Kauravas was also duly communicated by the *vanecara,* on hearing which Draupadī is inflamed and both Draupadī and Bhīma censure Dharmaputra for his belief in chance, destiny, forgiveness and the like instead of immediate action to wreak vengeance on their foes. The 2nd *sarga* shows Dharmaputra in the midst of a volley of censures of the above kind when sage Vyāsa visits him. In the 3rd *sarga* Vyāsa informs Dharmaputra that he had come to impart to them a spell (*vidyā*) in the nature of *Indra-mantra* (*aindra-mantrarūpāṁ-siddhiṁ*) which will vouch fulfillment of their desires[2]. To Arjuna (Jiṣṇu) who, beckoned by Dharmaputra approached the sage, Vyāsa gave the *mantra,* commissioned him to perform *tapas* (*tapaḥ samādhau*) and observe the life of *munis* (*munīnām-ācāraṁ*) on the top of Indrakīla hill to which a *guhyaka* or *yakṣa* would lead him. The austerities on this hill were meant to be directed to Indra so that he can bless him and give him weapons to secure victory.[3] The 4th *Sarga* contains a description of the beauties of nature in the forest and the autumnal season.

[1] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture,* part II, pl. XXXIII-a.

[2] *Kirātārjunīya,* 3rd *Sarga,* v. 23.

[3] *Ibid.,* 3rd *Sarga,* vv. 29-30.

A description of Himācala and of the Indrakīla hill and its surroundings forms the subject matter of the 5th *Sarga*. The sixth *Sarga* deals with Arjuna's severe austerities on the Indrakīla hill, Guhyakas informing Indra of it and Indra sending his nymphs (*Surasundarīḥ*—verse 39) to test Arjuna's strength of mind and purpose (*niyamasthiratāṁ*). The 7th *Sarga* shows the nymphs approaching Arjuna in the Indrakīla-hill. The 8th, 9th and 10th *Sargas* constitute the "temptation" episode in which the celestial nymphs are sporting and preparing themselves for the conquest of Arjuna (*Surāṅganā-vihāra*) in the 8th, indulging in enjoyment and love making (*Surasundarī-saṁbhoga*) in the 9th *Sarga*, tempting and alluring him with a view to weaning him away from his purpose (*tapas*), and being defeated by Arjuna's indifference to them and their love attempts returning to Indra to report their defeat and the firm resolve of Arjuna (Jiṣṇu).

The 11th *sarga* deals with the meeting of Arjuna with Indra. Indra approached Arjuna disguised as a *muni*, bent with age, tired, with shaggy strands of hair (*jaṭās*) and leaning on a staff (*yaṣṭi*) for support.[1] Arjuna received him in due form and with respect. The pseudo-*muni* gave him a big sermon on *mokṣa*, admonished him for resorting to penance and still clinging to weapons of war and assured him that *mokṣa* will be his on that very hill (*Indrakīla*) at the base of which the river Gaṅgā flowed,[2] if only he would abandon his warlike weapons (*mā bhūr=udāyudhaḥ*). Arjuna replied that his was not *muni-dharma* (verse 42) nor his end *mokṣa* (release), but a *vrata* (vow) addressed to Indra under Vyāsa's orders, so that Indra pleased, may help him to remove the disgrace that the Pāṇḍavas and Draupadī had sustained at the hands of the Kauravas. Bhāravi makes Arjuna's reply powerful and appealing with characteristic poetic skill in the following verse—

> Vicchinnābhravilāyaṁ vā vilīye nagamūrdhani |
> Ārādhya vā Sahasrākṣam=ayaśaḥ śalyam=uddhare ||
>
> —11th *sarga*, v. 79.

[1] *Ibid.*, 11th *Sarga*, vv. 2-5.

[2] Vivikte=smin=nage bhūyaḥ plāvite *Jahnukanyayā* |
Pratyāsīdati muktis=tvām purā mā bhūr=udāyudhaḥ || 11th *sarga*, v. 80.

Other references in Bhāravi giving the name of the river as Gaṅgā or *Surasarit* are 10th *sarga*, v. 12, and 12th *sarga*, v. 54.

="Either I wither away on this hill-top, or worshipping Indra remove (lit. pull out) (with Indra's help) the arrow of disgrace (in me)".

On hearing this Indra was immensely pleased and revealing his godly form embraced him (*tanuja*) and advised him to perform austerities and worship addressed to Śiva (*Pināki*). He further assured Arjuna that if Bhava (Śiva) was pleased he (Arjuna) will not only find an end for all his miseries, but will also obtain necessary weapons that would bring him victory. Regarding the weapons that Arjuna sought of Indra, he assured that he can have them thereafter, but that he should immediately concentrate on such austerities as would please Śiva (*Pināki*).[1]

The twelfth *sarga* is equally important as it deals with Arjuna's concentrated *tapas* on Śiva and Śiva's entry into the scene as a *Kirāta*. The greater part of Indian sculptures representing Arjuna's penance is satisfactorily explained by a reference to the details versified in this *sarga*. The first part of the *sarga* deals with the austerities and the nature of the *tapas* of Arjuna[2]. The next verses (17-30) describe the attitude and reaction of the sages of the Himalayan forest to the penance of Arjuna and their resort to Śiva (*andhakāntaka*) for protection from the resultant heat (*tāpa*) of Arjuna's *tapas*. Śiva explains to them that Arjuna was no other than Nara come to the mortal world[3] and that he (Nara) and Acyuta (former Nārāyaṇa) were born in the world, as Brahmā desired, to annihilate *asuras*[4]. Śiva also told them that just then Arjuna was in peril as Mūka-*dānava*, apprehending that Arjuna's penance was *Sura-kṛtya* or work of the Suras was rushing to the spot to kill Arjuna and that therefore he should hasten to Arjuna's protection and that they might accompany him. So saying Śiva

[1] 11th *sarga*, v. 81.

Prīte Pināķini mayā saha lokapālair=lokatraye=pi vihitāprativāryavīryaḥ |
Lakṣmīṁ samutsukayitāsi bhṛśaṁ pareṣām=uccārya vācam=iti tena tirobabhūve ||

[2] 12th *sarga*, vv. 1-16.

[3] *Ibid.*, v. 33.

Badarī=tapovananivāsaniratam=avagāta mānyathā|
Dhātur=udayanidhane jagatāṁ Naramaṁśam=Ādipuruṣasya gāṁ gatam ||

[4] *Ayaṁ=Acyutaś=ca vacanena sarasiruhajanmanaḥ prajāḥ |*
Pātum=asuranidhanena vibhū bhuvam=abhyupetya manujeṣu tiṣṭhataḥ || v. 35.

donned the attire of a *Kirāta*. To aid him, a big army of *Kirātas* followed him, as the *Pramatha-gaṇas* of Śiva also took to *Kirāta* attire (*Veṣa*) and equipped themselves with tridents, axes, bows and arrows. This mighty army (*vanecara camūḥ*) of hunters moved as in a hunt,[1] the atmosphere resounding with their yelling. As the hunter-army moved, the poet Bhāravi says, that it was surprising to note that birds and animals of natural antipathy forgot their antipathy and moved with the army, in the same way as warring people will forget their individual grievances and combine momentarily against a common enemy.[2] Lions were not perturbed when the army moved but came out of their caves, yawning. Thus causing commotion in the forest, the *Kirāta* came with the army to the *āśrama* of Arjuna where deer were grazing happily and merrily. There he espied Mūkāsura in the form of a wild boar ready to rush at Arjuna. Leaving the army in the bog of Gaṅgā, accompanied by a few select hunters, and covered by bushes and shrubs, the *Kirāta* followed the track of the boar.[3]

The 13th *sarga* records the boar-hunt and the battle of words that followed between the *Kirāta* and Arjuna. *Sarga* 14 relates to the advice of a messenger (*dūta*) from the army of the *Kirāta*. *Sargas* 15 and 16 describe the fights between the *Kirāta* and Arjuna. The 17th *sarga* is a continued account of their fight till Arjuna was deprived of his weapons (bow, arrows and sword). The 18th and the last *sarga* deals with their hand-to-hand fight, the subsequent fall of Arjuna, his prayers to Śiva, Śiva's gift to Arjuna of the *Pāśupatāstra* (*Raudramastram*), and the subsequent gift to him by Indra and other Lokapālas of their own weapons. The last verse in the 18th *sarga* marks the end of the story. Śiva bade him "go home, win victories over your enemies". And Arjuna returned to Dharmaputra and bowed before him.[4]

[1] *Mṛigayā*—12th *sarga*, verse 44.

[2] 12th *sarga*, verse 46.

[3] 12th *sarga*, v. 54—
Kacchānte Surasarito nidhāya senām= anvitaḥ sakatipayaiḥ Kirātavaryaiḥ |

[4] 18th *sarga*, v. 48—
Vraja jaya ripulokaṁ pādapadmānataḥ san=gadita iti Śivena ślāghito Devasaṁghaiḥ |
Nijagṛham=atha gatvā sādaraṁ Pāṇḍuputro dhṛtagurujayalakṣmīr=Dharmasūnuṁ nanāma ||

ARJUNA'S PENANCE AS REPRESENTED IN SCULPTURE:

It will be our endeavour now to deal with the representation of this theme in Indian sculpture of both pre-Bhāravi's and post-Bhāravi's times. Naturally pre-Bhāravi sculpture finds ready explanation from the *Mahābhārata* version, while sculptures of Bhāravi's time, and post-Bhāravi's age are explained by Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* or the *Mahābhārata* or by both. The accompanying map (at the end) shows the places in ancient India where this story was popular as a theme for sculpture and painting.

In Bihar

Its popularity in the Gupta period and its contribution to the *Golden age* of Indian art under the Guptas is brought out by three carved pillars now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Pl. I. a-e). These pillars were found built into the walls of a house in village Chandimau on the old road from Silao to Giriyek in the Bihar Subdivision of the Patna District. Their accidental discovery near the Magadhan and Gupta capital Patna (Pāṭaliputra) is of far-reaching importance to our study. Only one of them can be said to be complete, the others being fragments. Their description is as follows:—

"The first pillar fragment is the lower half of a large one, square at the base and with an octagonal shaft. The shafts of these pillars are square from the base up to a height of 1′ 9″. At this height there is on each face of the pillar an oblong panel measuring 1′4″ × 10″, which projected about ½″ from the side, and contained a bas-relief. Over each panel is another semi-circular panel containing ornamental figures, such as a *Kīrtimukha*, or a *Kinnarī*, with arabesque work in the inter-spaces. The shaft over these semi-circular panels was octagonal in section, the spandrels above the semi-circular panels being filled up with ornamental foliage. On each alternate face of the octagonal portion of the shaft is a lion with one head and two bodies. It is impossible to form any idea of the remaining portion of these pillars. When the pillars were removed from the walls of the house, no other fragments came to light, and the owner of the house did not know whence the pillars had originally come. Two of the pillars bear fragmentary inscriptions, in characters of the north-eastern type, in vogue



a.



b.



during the 5th or 6th centuries A.D. as well as a number of marks known as "shell-shaped characters".

Pillar—(fragment) No. 1 is, on the whole, in a better state of preservation than the others. The upper part of it, above the semi-circular panels, is missing, but three out of four of the oblong panels have been almost entirely preserved. Moreover, the square portions of the shaft below the oblong panels have escaped damage. The bas-reliefs in the oblong panels still remaining on the pillar represent scenes from the *Mahābhārata*".[1]

The ornamental figures viz., *kīrtimukha, kinnarī* with arabesque work in the inter-spaces are definitely Gupta decorative designs already known and proved as beyond any doubt by Prof. O. C. Gangoly in his recent article entitled "A Gupta pillar at the Museum in Benares."[2]

The beginning and end of the story are shown in one panel (Pl. 1-a) in a manner that will not be readily clear unless the story as narrated in the *Kairāta Parva and Indralokagamana Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* is remembered as the background. In short the scene on the right half of the panel is the *Prologue* and that on the left half is the *Epilogue.* A tree is shown right in the centre indicating as it were the division. The tree is also an *upalakṣaṇa* or indicator suggesting that it is the tree of the Himālayan jungle in the vicinity of which Arjuna's penance, his encounter and combat with Śiva as *Kirāta,* his defeat, and his obtaining *Pāśupatāstra* from Śiva happened. And Mātali found him there when he came with Indra's chariot to fetch him to Indraloka. In the relief Mātali is seated on the chariot and with the reins held in his hands directing the horses (two are shown) to negotiate a bend. Arjuna is shown on the chariot as standing with his bow held in his left (*savyasācī*). A *channavīra* on his chest and the quiver on his right shoulder can be made out. The standing pose of Arjuna serves a double purpose. It distinguishes him from Mātali and also reveals his alert, eager and enthusiastic mood, evidently the result of his successful *vrata* and the prospect of meeting his benefactor and sire Indra. The hair secured in a top-knot (*kaparda*)

[1] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1911-12, p. 162.

[2] *Oriental Art*, Oxford, vol. III, No. 2, 1950.

shows that he has not yet found time to attend to his hair, which is naturally in the same form in which it was when he was engaged in the penance. The *Kaparda* can be made out on the right side of the panel where Arjuna is engaged in the penance, standing on one foot and holding a rosary (*japamālā*) aloft with both hands. Around him are four fires placed in bowls each. At Mahābalipuram, though the fires do not occur, Arjuna has both hands raised above his head as here but instead of holding a rosary as here he has arranged his fingers into a web giving him a slot through which the sun (Āditya) can be faced with the eyes (Pl. X). To all Brāhmaṇas this pose is easy to comprehend as they have to adopt this pose called *Sūryopasthāna* every day during their *mādhyānhika vandana* and look at the Sun above repeating the mantra—"Dṛśe viśvāya Sūryam citraṁ devānāṁ paśyema śaradaś-śatam. jīvema...." This explanation throws light on the four fires also. Among the varieties of penance, one amidst five fires (*pañcāgni*) is considered effective. The fifth fire will be the burning Sun above. Thus the upraised hands of Arjuna suggest the fifth fire Sūrya, and the circular rosary held by both hands gives him the needed slot or opening to behold the blazing Sun (*madhyānha*) with naked eyes. The same will be the explanation in the Mahābalipuram sculpture (Plate X). At the extreme right end of the panel, where it is broken (and the broken part missing) stands the figure of a man (only the lower part remains) who is probably Śiva as Kirāta. His under-garment and part of *uttarīya* can be made out. On the square face of the pillar below the panel are a number of "shell—shaped" characters which R. D. Banerji assigns to the 5th or 6th century A.D.[1]

The miscellaneous nature of the inscriptions and the "shell-shape" have led R. D. Banerji to attribute them to vandal pilgrims in the 5th or 6th century A.D. and the carving itself to the 4th or 5th century A.D. The fine workmanship carries the sculpture to the Mid-Gupta period.[2] If we relate this piece of Gupta pillar to *Śilpa-śāstras* we find that it belongs to one of the five orders of pillars that *Mānasāra* calls "Śubhaṁkarī", a name applied to pillars having four faces. The bases, if occupied by vases *pūrṇa kuṁbha* (*pūrṇaghaṭa*) are called "latā-kumbha". The shaft is known

[1] "-*āṭharasya*" and again to the left "*Śrī-ma...ṇya.*"

[2] *A. S. I. A. R.*, 1911-12, p. 166.

as "potika" on which decorations with "waving ornamental foliages" and oblong panels such as in the Chandimau pillar occur.[1]

The second oblong panel in the pillar (pl. I-b) represents the fight between Arjuna and the *Kirāta;* first with bow and arrows, then with their hands and fists. The extreme left which is unfortunately broken and missing shows the legs of two men. The pair of legs nearer the existing complete part of the panel is evidently of Arjuna between whom and the *Kirāta* can be seen a number of horizontal arrows. The *Kirāta* who faces left holds a bow in his right hand in a manner suggesting that he has snatched Arjuna's bow away from him. We saw how Arjuna's arrows were all caught by the *Kirāta* till Arjuna's stock was exhausted and how Arjuna thereupon smote the *Kirāta* with his bow. The *Kirāta* skilfully snatched away Arjuna's bow. In the panel he holds the bow well under control and beyond Arjuna's reach and with a swagger of body and mocking face asks Arjuna "Now, your bow is mine, What next?" R. D. Banerji takes the *Kirāta* here for Arjuna and explains the curved object in the right hand as either the bow or the sword with which he struck Śiva when he lost his bow to the *Kirāta.* But the curvilinear nature of the subject indicates that it is a bow. The fleshy and plumpy body which is in contrast to the emaciated and skeleton-like body of Arjuna shown on the extreme right of the panel is again a proof that the person represented is the *Kirāta.* The *Kirāta* wears however a *channavīra.* And Arjuna on the chariot (pl. 1-a) and Arjuna kneeling before Śiva (pl. I-c) wear it. But Arjuna in penance (pl. I-a) and Arjuna in wrestling (pl. I-b) are without it. It is therefore presumed that Arjuna in the shooting duel did not have it likewise. The convention would appear to be to show it when the person is happy and in affluence, not when he is in a *vrata* or unhappy. The right end of the panel shows the pair wrestling with their front legs interlocked and hands drawing the chests towards each other. These two are tricks of wrestlers. The former is meant to throw the foe down and the latter to press the breath out and thereby vanquish the opponent. The absence of *channavīra* on the skeleton-like form of Arjuna can be noticed. Both *Kirāta* and Arjuna have their hair arranged in a top-knot (*kaparda*) but the form of *Kirāta* is larger and more plumpy than Arjuna's.

[1] *Citra-patra-taraṅgaiśca bhūṣayitvā tu potikam* –*Oriental Art*, vol. III, No. 2.

The third panel on the Chandimau pillar (pl. I-c) shows Arjuna falling at the *Kirāta's* feet and through prayers 'begging pardon for' *Śivāparādha.* Śiva being pleased, reveals to Arjuna his form with Pārvatī as Kailāsanātha and grants him *Pāśupatāstra.* The kneeling Arjuna before the four—handed form of Śiva recalls Śiva's saying "Oh Arjuna! In your former life you were a great sage Nara by name, and a friend of Nārāyaṇa. I give you now divine sight (*divyacakṣus*) so that you can behold me."[1] With divine vision (*divyacakṣus*) granted to him Arjuna beholds him in two stages, first with four hands, one of which indicates *varada* (boon-conferring) pose and next as seated on Kailāsa with Umā by his side, with serpents coiled round his neck, and with *penis erectum* (*ūrdhvameḍhra*) exposed. This time he has only two hands. The left hand rests on Umā's shoulder and the right is extended towards Arjuna in the significant attitude of conferring on Arjuna boons (*varada*). The boon in the picture is the *Pāśupatāstra.* Arjuna kneels with a curved bow shown against him and the quiver on his shoulder and with hands folded in *añjali* indicating the successful termination of his penance and the receipt of the reward. The fourhanded figure standing before Pārtha represents *Pāśupatāstra,* the knowledge of which Śiva imparted to Pārtha, and which according to the *Mahābhārata,* waited from thence on Pārtha as it did before on Śiva and looked like the embodiment of Yama[2]. Śiva and Pārvatī seated on rocks stand for the idea of Śiva appearing to Arjuna with Pārvatī as the lord of Kailāsa (*Kailāsanātha*).

The motif of the "Kīrtimukha" or "Face of Glory" originally illustrating a Śaiva myth[3] occurs on two sides of the pillar and on the third side which alone exists (the fourth side missing) is a *Kinnarī,* of the class of semi-divine musicians of the Indian Olympus, half-bird and half-human in conception, with an elaborately devised tail in involved foliage effectively filling up the whole panel. From early literary texts of the Gupta times we learn that the *Kinnarī*-motif and sometimes *Kinnara-mithuna* motif is derived from literary texts such as Kālidāsa's *Meghasandeśa* which adverts to "heavenly pairs" (*amara-mithuna*) and "Kinnaras and their wives" and "sweet-voiced

[1] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva,* ch. XXXIX, v. 70.

[2] *Ibid.,* ch. XL, vv. 20-21.

[3] *Rupam,* No. 1, 1920. Prof. O. C. Gangoly, *The Kirtimukha, the life history of an Indian architectural ornament.*

Kinnarīs singing in praise of Śiva's conquest of Tripura"[1]. From this, we may interpret the *Kinnarī* figure above the panel of "Arjuna beholding Kailāsanātha" (pl. I-c) as engaged in singing the praise of Śiva's exploits, while her mate, the *Kinnara*, who probably occupied the other side of the pillar (now missing) provided the musical accompaniment with his flute (*veṇu*). The *Kīrtimukha* (pls. I-a,b) and the singing *Kinnarī* (pl. I-c) being appropriate motifs for decorating a shrine of Śiva, the Chandimau pillar with scenes of Arjuna's penance obviously came from a lost temple of Śiva (*Kirātamūrti*) of the mid-Gupta period.

Ahicchatrā (U.P.)

Ahicchatrā, in Bareilly District, Uttar Pradesh, where Sri K. N. Dikshit excavated between 1940 and 1944, yielded a number of terracotta figurines and plaques. One of the plaques, assigned on stylistic grounds to a period between A.D. 450 and 650, comes from a Śiva temple and has been described by Dr. V. S. Agrawala, who has published a paper on the *Terracottas of Ahicchatrā* in *Ancient India*.[2] The plaque, 2.4″×2.2″, reveals a battle scene in which two archers, similarly attired, similarly equipped and mounted on chariots are engaged in an archery combat. The battle scene with the occurrence of the boar on the flag of one of the combatants in it has been identified by Dr. Agrawala as from the *Kirātārjunīya* story in which "Śiva as a wild hunter had to take up arms against Arjuna to establish his right to a boar"[3]. But the occurrence of the boar on the standard of the warrior on the left where it can be least expected if the event related to the *Kirātārjunīya*, the standard of the warrior on the right with a crescent-moon (*Soma*) which can neither mark out Śiva nor Arjuna, the two chariots with the warriors standing one in each, for which there is no place in the *Kirāta*-Arjuna feud, the similarity between the two fighters in dress, turban, *channavīra* and ornaments which go against the penitent (*tapasvī*) Arjuna's fight with Śiva in hunter's dress *Kirāta-veṣa*, and the presence of a drummer in the centre of the combat as in a battle-field go against this identification.

[1] *Meghasandeśa*, I, 18, 58.

[2] No. 4, p. 171 and plate LXVI.

[3] *Ibid.*

The boar formed the emblem of Jayadratha,[1] king of the Sindhus, in the battle of Kurukṣetra and the crescent-moon (*Soma*) marked the standard of Dharmaputra[2] among thePāṇḍavas. The scene appears to have been drawn from the *Mahābhārata* and to relate to the epoch-making fight between Jayadratha and Dharmaputra at Kurukṣetra, when the latter attempted to follow Abhimanyu into the *Padmavyūha* that Abhimanyu broke through. Details of this identification have been noticed by the writer elsewhere[3]. The *Mahābhārata* records that Jayadratha resisted the four Pāṇḍava brothers successfully and prevented them from following Abhimanyu into the *vyūha* that he had penetrated, by virtue of a boon that Śiva granted him.[4]

In Orissa

While this interesting theme does not occur in Bengal, the adjoining province of Orissa (ancient *Utkala* and *Kaliṅga*) has treasured it. The temple-city of Bhuvaneśvar is no exception. The theme occurs on the outside of the *vimāna* of the temple of Svarṇajvāleśvara. This temple which is midway between the big tank (Bindusāgara) and the Paraśurāmeśvara temple, dates like the Paraśurāmeśvara from the 7th century A.D. This period was important in Orissan architecture and sculpture. As in South India, to depict stories in stone was a special feature of the art of this period in Orissa. Among the incidents carved on the outside of the Svarṇajvāleśvara temple (now in an advanced stage of decay) mention may be made of Pārvatī's *tapas*, Rāma killing the golden deer (Mārīca), and *Vali-vadha*, and lastly the fight between *Kirāta* and Arjuna. Photographs have been luckily taken of the scenes relating to Arjuna's penance before the edifice got dismantled and are figured here (pl. II).

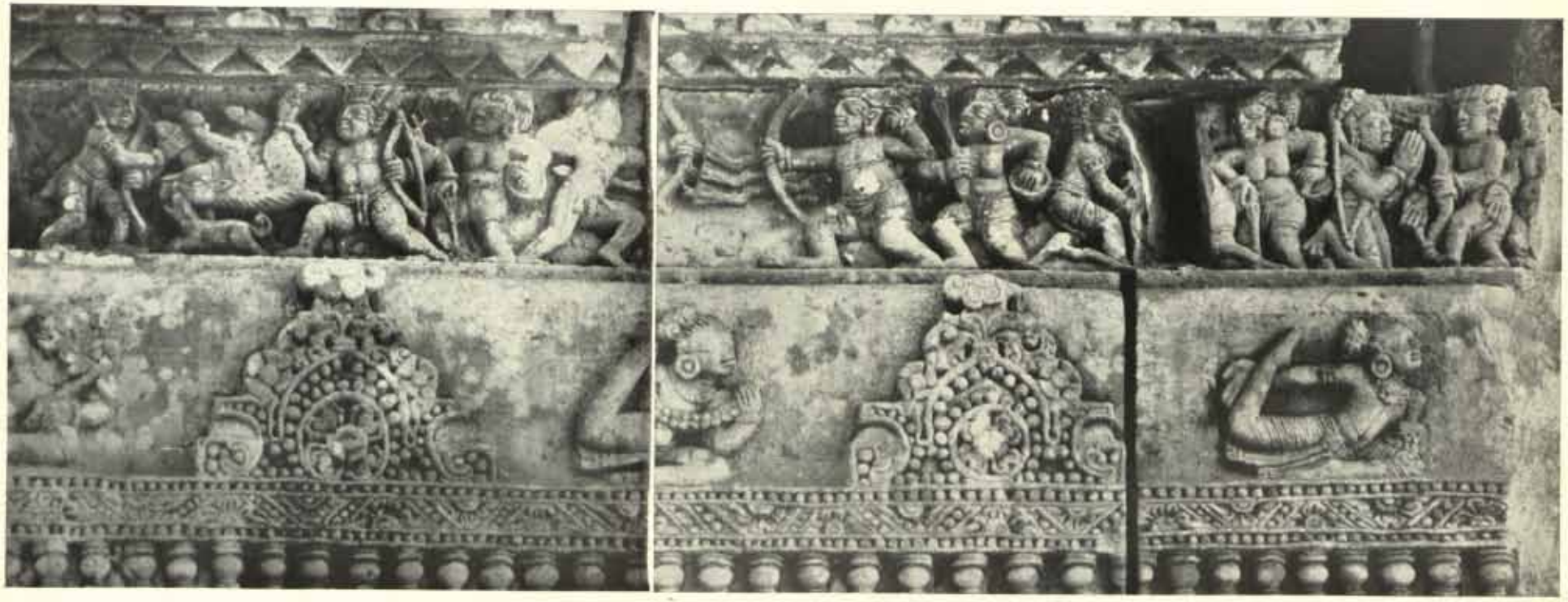
The story reads from left to right and commences from the stage when Arjuna started his concentrated *vrata* to propitiate Śiva in the Himālayan forest. The plastic rendering is obviously after the *Mahābhārata* version

[1] *Mahābhārata, Bhiṣma parva*, XVII, v. 30.

[2] *Mahābhārata, Droṇa parva*, XXIII, v. 31.

[3] *I. H. Q.*, 1951, Vol. XXVII, No. 4. T. N. Ramachandran, *An interesting terracotta plaque from Ahicchatrā*, pp. 304-311.

[4] *Mahābhārata, Droṇa parva*, ch. LXXIII, vv 1-12.



as the *Kirāta* appears in the scene in the company of his lady, *viz.*, Pārvatī in the dress of a huntress. Bhāravi has no place for her in that garb *i.e.*, a huntress till the end when Śiva blesses Arjuna with a sight of himself and Pārvatī. The frieze is continuous but the story has been worked into it in five phases, the demarcations being suggested by turning away the figures occurring at the ends. Three trees against a rugged and rocky foreground stand for the forest in Himācala and Arjuna is shown as kneeling or standing on bent knees with his bow hanging on his right shoulder and hands folded in worship. Evidently his pose and the presence of the bow perturbed the sages who went to Śiva and reported to him the incongruous nature of the person, his belongings and his penance. Just at this moment the boar must have visited him and the broken part of the stone to his right perhaps showed it. We move now to the right and to the next phase of the story which relates to the hunting of the wild boar. Between Arjuna with his *gāṇḍīva* on the left and the *Kirāta* on the right is shown the kill, *viz.*, the boar, held upside down, by the *Kirāta* holding its hind leg and Arjuna holding its front leg. This scene showing the dead boar, throws light on the previous panel where Arjuna's kneeling condition and the dormant nature of his *gāṇḍīva* can be explained as suggesting his momentary doubt whether he could take to arms in the midst of a *vrata* and his subsequent consolation that he can kill in self-defence (see above p. 5). Arjuna is here evidently accusing the *Kirāta* of a severe breach of rules relating to hunting and the *Kirāta* is equally delivering the counter-thrust that Arjuna not only balked him of his own prey but talked of rules. As both challenged each other to answer such conduct with life, the duel was agreed upon. In the picture the bone of contention is the kill (boar). A dog below with characteristic canine greed has a bite and go at the wild boar's mouth. The introduction of the dog in the scene is to suggest that it belonged to the *Kirāta*, as hunters out to hunt take with them dogs. The *Kirāta* is stout of body in contrast to Arjuna, who however is not emaciated as he ought to be. Behind the *Kirāta*, stands his lady, a cloth apron covering her waist and thighs ; she holds in her left hand a shield and in her right a sword or arrow (?). If it is an arrow, it is evidently kept in readiness for her husband's service whose right hand was engaged in holding the boar and his left in holding the bow. Or the manner in which the bow is held by the *Kirāta* with the bow-string exposed to his lady and the way she has adjusted

herself behind and close to her mate and grasped the arrow with her fingers would seem to suggest that should necessity arise she could discharge the arrow at Arjuna herself in the event of her mate failing to disengage himself from his hold on the boar.

The third stage in the story relates to the fight with bow and arrows between the two. The *Kirāta* is on the right with his lady behind holding a sword and shield in her hands. The arrows are flying horizontally. Below on the ground a serpent can be noticed among other more indistinct shapes. The serpent means either that some reptiles of the soil were disturbed by the fight or that they are the *nāgāstras* that Arjuna issued which fell flat on the ground rendered ineffective by the Kirāta's counter-thrust of the *Gāruḍāstra*, Garuḍa being a powerful foe of the snake class. According to the story all the arrows of Arjuna were rendered useless by the superior counter-arrows of Siva[1] who soon compelled Arjuna to smite with his bow, when the stock of arrows was over. The bow was snatched away by the *Kirāta* and Arjuna began to fight with the sword. In the frieze this is shown as the penultimate scene. Though the stone is broken in the middle and a part of it is missing, we can make out Arjuna on the left fighting with the sword, while in the foreground lies his bow rendered ineffective. Only the lower part of the combating *Kirāta* remains in the frieze, the rest being broken. Behind the *Kirāta* stands his buxom lady with sword and shield in her hands. Her face and pose suggest that she is watching with evident satisfaction. Probably Arjuna was failing and falling. Hence her look of satisfaction at the result and the dormant condition of her sword which is resting on the ground and the shield which she is taking behind her back. The corpulence of the lady is proof of the artist's ingenuity to suggest her Amazonian life as of the hunter's class. The last phase of the story is shown at the extreme right end where Arjuna kneels before the *Kirāta* with his hands held in *añjali* and with a bow resting on his right shoulder. The *Kirāta* and behind the *Kirāta* his lady stand all eager to confer boons on Arjuna, as their right hands would suggest. The *Kirāta* offers Arjuna a bow, whose bow-string is turned towards Arjuna. This is an abrupt end of the

[1] *Bharavi*, 16th *sarga*, vv. 36, 42, 48 for *nāgāstra* of Arjuna and *Garuḍāstra* of Śiva; vv. 49-61 for *āgneyāstra* of Arjuna extinguished by the *Varuṇāstra* of Śiva; vv. 62-64 for other *astras* of Arjuna countermanded by Śiva's superior *astras*.

story without conjuring up such scenes as the appearance of Śiva, four handed, and with Umā on Kailāsa, etc., before Arjuna. A little part of the frieze behind the *Kirāta*-woman is broken but obviously there was no space there for the above to be accommodated. Perhaps what we see in the sculpture was all that was intended. There was no attempt to deify the God as Mahādeva or Kailāsanātha or Pināka pāṇi. He is shown as *Kirātārjunamūrti*, the form in which Arjuna got to know him intimately. A Similar rendering and similar spirit can be noticed in a bronze image of the 9th century A.D. from Tiruveṭkalam near Chidambaram representing Śiva as *Kirātārjunamūrti*.[1]

The architectural and decorative features of the Svarṇajvāleśvara recall like its cognate the Paraśurāmeśvara, Gupta models that got highly conventionalised by contact with local peculiarities. Its date stands between late Gupta and Bhāravi's advent, for the story depicted here reveals that the artist drew largely from the Mahābhārata and was perhaps not aware of the *Kirātārjunīya*. If Bhāravi flourished towards the end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th century A.D. and yet was unknown in Bhuvaneśvar it speaks for the relatively earlier date of the Svarṇajvāleśvara frieze and hence the lowest limit to this frieze should be the 7th century A.D.

In Bhuvaneśvar, on the north side of the *Jagmohan* of the Śiśireśvar temple (by the side of the Vaitāl Deul) are found on its architrave scenes such as rows of elephants and lions and scenes illustrating the *Kirāta*-Arjuna story in continuous panels as in the Svarṇajvāleśvara temple. The story proceeds from proper left to proper right. In front of an elephant procession stands Pārvatī with a sword or stick in her hand, most probably an arrow, laid vertically on the ground as while resting. Next she is shown by the side of Śiva who with bow in hand is shooting arrows at Arjuna, who, emaciated and with bow in hand, is letting arrows at Śiva. Four arrows are shown between them as flying at each other. Pārvatī is standing beside Śiva with empty hands and this would suggest that the first figure of Pārvatī occurring at the commencement of the panel was probably holding an arrow which in the next stage she has evidently given to her husband. To the proper right of Arjuna is the next panel in which Śiva and Arjuna

[1] *Bhāravi*, 17th *sarga*, vv. 55-60 for sword fight.

are shown as wrestling. The next panel to the proper right shows Śiva and Arjuna with the shot boar (upturned) shown behind Arjuna. The incident relates to the wordy feud between Arjuna and the *Kirāta* over the boar. The next scene to the proper right and at the extreme end of the panel shows Arjuna with a bow resting on his left hand kneeling in front of a *Liṅga*. Arjuna's hair is collected in a *jaṭābhāra* as in the case of Lakulīśa figures. The size of the entire panel is 3'4" × 9".

The paneling now continues on the east side of the architrave and we get first two warriors with bow and arrow held symmetrically. Perhaps they are Śiva and Arjuna. Next are a number of figures juxtaposed on either side of two principal fighters one with a bow in one hand and the other with a sword and shield in his hands. The figures posed on either side of this central pair are as follows:—

From proper left, an ascetic posed kneeling like a cowherd on a stick, an ascetic (the same as the first one) kneeling in front of a man and woman evidently Śiva and Pārvatī, next the pair of Pārvatī and Śiva but Śiva having a sword and shield, next a warrior with a sword, next another warrior with a sword and shield in a fighting attitude. On the proper right of the central fighting pair we get first seven warriors with sword and shield in their hands, next an elephant with a warrior attempting to get on its back and last a shepherd resting on his stick. In this panel Arjuna can be distinguished by his *jaṭābhāra* and with this distinguishing mark he is shown thrice, in one of which he is kneeling before Śiva and Pārvatī. The other warriors by the side of Śiva are apparently the various *gaṇas* that transformed themselves as *kirātas*. The version appears to be after the *Mahābhārata*. The workmanship is poor when compared to that of Svarṇajvāleśvara.

While the Svarṇajvāleśvara temple belongs to the 7th century A.D. the Śiśireśvara temple has to be grouped with the *Vaitāl* Deul and the Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple and assigned to the Bhauma epoch or the 8th century A.D. Thus the *Kirāta*-Arjuna relief in the Śiśireśvara will date a century later than the Svarṇajvāleśvara frieze.

In Āndhra-Deśa

Vijayawāḍa:

Proceeding south from Bhuvaneśvar we reach Vijayawāḍa (Bejavāḍa,

Pechchevāḍa, Bījavāḍa, and Vijayavāṭikā of inscriptions) on the banks of the river Kṛṣṇā in the *Āndhra-Deśa* where on a hill on the north bank of the river Kṛṣṇā, locally called *Indrakīla* exists a sculptured pillar, 5'6" high with a moulded top and sculptured vertical panels and an inscription on the base of two of its four faces (pl. IX-a). The carved panels of the pillar are 10 and contain representations of scenes from Arjuna's penance. At the base of the northern and southern faces of the pillar, is an inscription of the 9th century A.D., in Telugu script, the language being Saṁskṛit. Strangely enough the inscription is recorded from bottom upwards. It has been published By Rao Bahadur H. Krishna Sastri[1] and runs as follows:—

North face.

1. "Arjuna (ḥ) Phalguna (ḥ) Pārttha (ḥ) Kirīṭī Śvetavāha-
2. naḥ() Bībhatsur=Vvijaya(ḥ) Kṛshṇaḥ Savyasāchī Dhanaṁ-
3. jayaḥ() Svasti() (Śrū)yate khalu Dvaita-vane Pāṇḍavā-
4. n=dṛishṭvā tat-pakshapā(te)na vyagro Arjjuna Indrakīlam gatvā
5. Vi(shṇu)-sā(hāyyato) tapasā Mahendram=ārādhya tad-upa-
6. de(śāt) Maheśvaram=ārādhayataḥ Pā (śu)pat-āstra(ā)
7. (r) t(th) am ch=āti gahanam=Indrakīlam ayam Yakshaḥ prāpa-
8. yishyati tvām=ity=adishṭavān=iti() Sa cha Yakshaḥ śāpā-
9. ntarāt=Kalau Pechche(vā)ḍa-(Ka)liyama-Boyi-putraḥ
10. Tri(ko)ṭi-Boyi-nāmā dhārmmikaḥ prādu(rabhū)-
11. (d=ya) (ś=cha) Karṇṇa ıva (ba)la-parākram-opeto vadā-
12. nyaś=cha () Mātalir=iva sarvva-kāryya-kuśala(ḥ) (svā)-
13. mi-bhaktaś=cha() Hanumān=iva vidi(ta)-janmānta-
14. (r-ā)va(tāro) sva-k(u)lottama-charitaś=cha () sah p(ū)-

South face.

15. rvvam=Arjjuna-maitryāj=ja(nm-ā)ntara-vedī tat-Pā-
16. śupat-āstr-āvāpti-kāla-(n) nidhānam=Indrakīle
17. (sva)-yaśo-nidhim-iva sva-kul-ābhivṛiddhaye
18. stambhaṁ=asthāpayat Indrakīlo giri-
19. r=yyāva(t)d=yāvach=ch eyam=mahā-nadī () Tri-
20. (ko)ṭṭi-Boyu-dharmmo=yaṁ stheyān=tāvad=bhaved=i-
21. ha Vijayāchāryyasya likhitam"

[1] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1915-16, pp. 98-100.

Translation

(Lines 1 to 3) Arjuna, Phalguna, Pārtha, Kirīṭī, Śvetavāhana, Bibhatsu, Vijaya, Kṛṣṇa, Savyasācī, Dhanaṁjaya.

(Ll. 3 to 8) Hail! It is indeed well known that seeing the Pāṇḍavas (in a distressed condition), in the Dvaita-vana (forest), Arjuna with the love (that he bore) for them, became distracted, went to the Indrakīla (hill) and with the assistance rendered by Viṣṇu worshipped Mahendra by penance; (and the latter) directed (him) thus—"This Yakṣa shall lead you to the inaccessible Indrakīla"—in order that he may worship Maheśvara (Śiva) through his (i.e., Indra's) initiation and obtain the (weapon) *Pāśupata astra.*

(Ll. 8 to 10). That same Yakṣa, as the result of a curse, was born in the Kali age as the pious son of Kaliyama-Boyi of Pechchevāḍa (and was) named Trikoṭi-Boyi.

(Ll. 10 to 18). And he, who like Karṇa was united with strength and prowess and was charitable; like Mātali, was capable of (doing) every business and was loyal; like Hanumān knew of (his) appearance in former existence and was the best-behaved of his race; becoming aware of (his) previous birth (as Yakṣa), in virtue of his old friendship with Arjuna, planted on Indrakīla (this) pillar, the treasure of skill (displayed by Arjuna) in obtaining that *Pāśupata astra,* for the increase of his race, just as (if it were) a treasure of his own fame.

(Ll. 18 to 21). As long as the mountain Indrakīla (lasts), as long as this big river (Kṛṣṇā) (exists), may this pious deed of Trikoṭṭi-Boyī remain steady on this (earth).

(Ll. 21). The writing of Vijayācārya.

The purport of the inscription is to show that a certain Trikōṭi-Bōyī or Trikoṭṭi-Bōyu, son of Kaliyama-Bōyi of Pechchevāḍa, set up the pillar as a memorial of his own fame, in order to secure merit for his race. Trikōṭi-Bōyī is identified in the inscription with the Guhyaka (Yakṣa) who in *Dvāpara* age was directed by Indra to guide Arjuna to Indrakīla, on the top of which Arjuna worshipped Śiva and acquired *Pāsupatāstra.* This Yakṣa finds no mention in the *Mahābhārata.* He was born in the Kali age as Trikōṭi-Bōyī of Pechchevāḍa (Bezwada), as the result of a curse. The virtue accruing from the help he rendered Arjuna in his former Yakṣa-

existence, gave Trikōṭi-Bōyī the knowledge (*Pūrvajñāna*) that the Indrakīla hill on which he set up his pillar was the very spot where Arjuna did penance and acquired *Pāśupatāstra* from Śiva.

Trikōṭi-Bōyi's dedication of the pillar on the top of the Indrakīla hill, throws light on the belief current in the 9th century A.D. associating the Indrakīla of Bezwada with the very hill which witnessed in the *Dvāpara-yuga* Arjuna's severe penance, his duel with Śiva as a wrestler (*malla-yuddha*), and his successful acquisition of the *Pāśupatāstra*, from Śiva. Sri H. Krishna Sastri, the able editor of this inscription, is surprised that the subject matter of the inscription so seriously recorded "is after all only the perpetuation of a traditional belief in the Mahābhārata story". But to us this record is of singular importance in our appreciation of the immortal poem of Bhāravi. The account given in the record is partially borne out by the carvings. The advent of the Yakṣa (Guhyaka) to lead Arjuna to Indrakīla which finds a place in Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya*[1] and not in the *Mahābhārata* finds adequate emphasis in the record, marking for the sculpture a Bhāravi-influence or post-Bhāravi date. While the name Indrakīla is the same in both, the river that lashes the hill sides at Bezwada is the river Kṛṣṇā, while Bhāravi describes the river as Gaṅgā.[2]

The picture story, like the record, begins on the north face of the pillar, which consists of two vertical panels. In the top panel stands Brahmā in *sama-bhaṅga* under a *prabhā*. Three of his four heads only are exposed to view as they ought to be in a relief. He has four hands, the upper two holding a book (*pustaka*) (?) and rosary (*akṣamālā*), the lower left a *kamaṇḍalu* with a rope tied to its neck and the lower right indicating *abhaya* or protection. The swan (*haṁsa*) which is the *vāhana* of Brahmā can be noticed at the right bottom of the panel near Brahmā's leg. The panel below shows Arjuna in penance, standing on one leg (the left) and his right leg bent[3] and holding in his right hand his bow (*gāṇḍīva*), while his left hand touches or rests on a loose belt, the object suggested being the sword (*asi*), which though not clear in the carving and perhaps not shown, may be recalled as

[1] Bhāravi, *Kirātārjunīyam*, 3rd *sarga*, vv. 29-30.

[2] *Ibid*, 11th *sarga*, v. 36; 12th *sarga*, v. 54.

[3] *Ibid*, 12th *sarga*, vv. 2, 27.

one among the war-like weapons associated with Arjuna in penance that confused the sages of the forest to such an extent that they approached Śiva and told him how they failed to understand Arjuna's penance, his, *muni-veṣa*, his bark-dress, his deer-hide *plus* the incongruous weapons of war.[1] The presence of Brahmā in the panel above and Arjuna standing on one leg below has puzzled Sri H. Krishna Sastri also who says:—

"The two niches together thus illustrate the first scene of the story, *viz.*, Arjuna's going into the Indrakīla forest and performing penance, apparently under instructions from Brahmā or meditating upon him". He again expresses his bewilderment as:—

"The Mahābhārata says that Arjuna performed penance under the direction of his elder brother Yudhiṣṭhira who told him... Thus it appears as if the penance was directed towards Brahmā. But the inscription published below states that it was directed first towards Mahendra"[2]

A study of Bhāravi's 12th *sarga*, verses 33 and 35 clears the above confusion. In these verses Śiva assured the doubting sages that the person doing penance on one leg and with weapons of war associated with him was Nara come to the mortal world along with Nārāyaṇa (as Acyuta) to annihilate *asuras* and that their advent as such was desired and ushered by Brahmā.[3] The Pitāmaha (Brahmā) is here playing a role similar to that he had been playing in the Deogarh relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa[4] and the Kumāra-Saṁbhava relief from Bhuvaneśvar.[5] Brahmā who is generally the creator of the world is here the *prompter*, the motivating agent or source and an invariable witness of the resultant happenings. In the Nara-Nārāyaṇa relief he played the role of a grand father (*Pitāmaha*) in addition, as Nara and Nārāyaṇa were his *mānasika-pautras*. Yet another explanation is afforded by the pillar itself. On three sides of it we have

[1] Bhāravi, *Kirātārjunīyam*, 12th *sarga*, v. 27.

[2] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1915-16, p. 96 and f.n.1.

[3] *Vacanena sarasiruhajanmanaḥ*—Bhāravi, 12th *sarga*, v. 35.

[4] *I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, p. 191-196—T. N. Ramachandran, *Fresh light on the Deogarh Relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa*, p. 195.

[5] *J.O.R.*, Madras, Vol. XIX, Part I—T. N. Ramachandran, *Two interesting sculptures from Orissa*, pp. 1-6.

representations of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva as a *liṅga*, answering the well-known convention to represent the Trinity. But the fourth side has the additional scene of Śiva as *Umāsahitamūrti* with his bull-*vāhana* in front (Pl. IX-a). This has to be explained as the inevitable sequel and end of Brahmā's prompting, for it clearly portrays Arjuna's successful penance and his beholding with *divyacakṣus* Śiva with Umā in Kailāsa.

The cubical part of the pillar below the figure of standing Arjuna contains a part of the inscription of Trikoṭi-Bōyi which as we observed already reads from bottom upwards. The first two lines contain a popular verse of ten different names of Arjuna which are repeated by people to ward off the evil effects of thunder[1]. Lines 3 to 8 record how Arjuna was distressed at their own (Pāṇḍavas') exiled condition in *Dvaita-vana*, went to Indrakīla hill and with help rendered by Viṣṇu worshipped Mahendra, who in turn gave him a Yakṣa to guide him to the inaccessible heights of Indrakīla and the advice that by worshipping Maheśvara there by severe austerities he can obtain the weapon *Pāśupatāstra*. Lines 8 to 14 tell us that the *Yakṣa*-guide of Arjuna in *Dvāpara-yuga* came to be born again in the *Kali-yuga*, as the result of a curse, as one Trikoṭi-Boyi, the pious son of Kaliyama-Boyi of Pechchevāḍa, and that he was charitable like Karṇa, loyal like Mātali, well-behaved and capable of knowing his previous births like Hanumān.

The scene continues next on the south face of the pillar. The paneling is similar to the north face. Lines 15 to 21 of Trikoṭi-Boyi's inscription continue on its cubical base, reading from bottom upwards and recording the planting of the pillar on Indrakīla hill by Trikoṭi-Boyi who became aware of his previous existence as the Yakṣa-friend of Arjuna who guided him to the Indrakīla hill to enable Arjuna to please Śiva by penance and obtain *Pāśupatāstra*. The scribe's name is given as Vijayācārya and nothing further is recorded here or known about him from other sources. Viṣṇu standing with conch and discus in his upper hands, *gadā* in his lower left and lotus-bud shown against his lower right which indicates *abhaya*, occupies the upper panel befitting his rank as the protector and

[1] Arjunaḥ Phalgunaḥ Pārthaḥ Kirīṭī Śvetavāhanaḥ |
Bībhatsur-vijayaḥ Kṛṣṇaḥ Savyasācī Dhananjayaḥ ||

the second member of the Hindu Trinity, Brahmā (the first member) having occupied as observed already the corresponding upper panel on the northern face of the pillar. A boar shown near Viṣṇu's right leg with its snout turned away from Vishṇu represents the *Asura* Mūka who mistaking Arjuna's penance as a *Sura-kritya*[1] assumes the form of a boar and attacks Arjuna. The ingenuity of the sculptor is revealed by showing a swan in the Brahmā panel, a bull in the Umāsahita (Śiva) panel and a boar in the Viṣṇu panel, the last serving more intentionally than accidentally as a member in the story of Arjuna depicted on the pillar. Incidentally the boar recalls the Varāha-incarnation of Viṣṇu as well and by its association with Viṣṇu in the panel justifies its introduction in this though strange manner. According to Rao Bahadur Krishna Sastri the representation of Viṣṇu and the boar together in one panel was due perhaps to Viṣṇu's desire to make an end of the terrible giant Mūkāsura by inciting him to disturb Arjuna's penance.[2] But the *Mahābhārata* and Bhāravi's and other known versions of the story of Arjuna do not bear it out. The inscription on the pillar brings Viṣṇu in the picture only to the extent of rendering assistance to Arjuna who began to do penance and worship Mahendra.[3] The inscription does not say that Viṣṇu incited Mūka into action against Arjuna. The boar turned away from Viṣṇu and shown in the receded back ground of the panel is perhaps to link it with the panel below, for who is it that we find in the lower panel than Arjuna cross-legged and in action, holding his *gāṇḍīva* in his right hand and drawing the arrow with his left hand, the left-hander (*Savyasācī*) that he was! Presumably it was aimed at the boar shown in the panel above, though the angle of aim and reach is slightly tilted, a factor which is further explained below (see page 35.).

The story continues now on the western face of the pillar, which is divided into four vertical panels(Pl. IX-a). In the topmost panel is Śiva with Umā in the particular form called Umā-Maheśvara or Umā-sahita, seated on a pedestal with the bull Nandī recumbent in front of it.

[1] Bhāravi, 12th *sarga*, v. 36.

[2] *A. S. I., A. R.*, 1915-16, p. 97.

[3] Line 5—"*Viṣṇusāhāyyato tapasā Mahendram=ārādhya*",

Śiva has four hands but the emblems are not clear, though one can make out the *abhaya-hasta* in the lower right. Umā with her right hand encircling Śiva and with a lotus-bud in her left hand is seated beside Śiva in her characteristic pose of *lalita*. According to the *Mahābhārata*, the sages of the forest, reported to Śiva that Arjuna was doing penance too hot for them to bear and sought his help. Śiva assured them, and accompanied by Umā and his *gaṇas*, all disguised as hunters, reached the place where Arjuna, though in penance, was actively contemplating how to engage the boar. Thus Umā-sahita (in the upper panel) is depicted here as concerned with the penance of Arjuna, and as deciding to go out to test Arjuna's skill, dressed as a *Kirāta*.[1] In the panel immediately below, Śiva and Umā are shown standing attired as *Kirātas* (*Kirāta-veṣa*). The apron of leaves on Śiva's waist can be noted. A big bow rests on his left hand. The lowest panel on the western face is in two vertical sections. Though their interpretation is somewhat confusing at the outset, the continuity of the story and the events that followed are achieved by putting the lowest subsection first, then the upper subsection and then the lowest panel occurring on the eastern face of the pillar.

The boar (the kill), dead, is shown in the lowest sub-section. As we know, the duel between Arjuna and Śiva followed the shooting of the boar. The arrows that Arjuna let out vanquished Śiva's followers (the *gaṇas*) who in their fright did not behold Śiva and ran away and had to be subsequently heartened by Skanda's encouragement and Śiva's laughter of assurance.[2] The four seated figures, one behind the other, and the one at the extreme right end being supported by another figure behind, represent the *Kirāta-senā* (the *gaṇas* disguised as *kirātas*) in the plight of dejection, fear and confusion. The sub-panel above shows the last stage of the duel when Arjuna is thrown down and the *Kirāta* is pressing the breath out to vanquish him, a trick common in wrestling. According to the *Mahābhārata*, the two wrestled till such time as Arjuna fell unconscious, bleeding and bruised.[3]

The story is continued in the bottom panel of the eastern face of the

[1] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, XXXIX, vv. 1-6.

[2] Bhāravi, 15th *sarga*, vv. 1, 2, 7, 29, 30.

[3] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, XXXIX, vv. 53-68.

pillar. Deprived of all his weapons and vanquished in wrestling, Arjuna was overwhelmed with sorrow. It struck him that his foe was no mortal and he immediately sprang up and making a clay altar (*sthaṇḍila*) and invoking Śiva in it he worshipped it with flowers.[1] The *Mahābhārata* also refers to it as a clay *image* of the wielder of *Pināka*, Śiva. In the sculpture Arjuna is seated in the left corner of the panel with the right hand doing *stava* or scattering flowers (as in *arcanā*) on the phallic form of Śiva shown in a deep-cut niche in front below. The term *Sthaṇḍila* has evidently led the sculptor to carve out the *liṅga*-form of *Pināka-pāṇi*. To his surprise and joy his (Arjuna's) flowers moved to the head of the *Kirāta*. Arjuna forthwith knelt at the feet of Śiva (Kirātamūrti) who gave Arjuna *godly* eyes (*divyacakṣus*) with which he beheld "that great effulgent deity, the great god, the dweller of the mountain, the weilder of the *Pināka* with his wife".[2] Śiva and Umā stand before the kneeling and worshipping Arjuna, who is shown in the panel just *as an ascetic* to indicate his transformation from the warring *Vijayī* into the penitent and mendicant worshipper of Śiva begging the Great god's pardon for *Śivāparādha*. Śiva, to whose left stands Umā. holds aloft with his right hand something looking like his trident or most probably the *Pāśupatāstra*, his gift to Arjuna. Umā's *karaṇḍa-makuṭa* on her head in contrast to the simple hair-knot shown on her head as a huntress (on the western face of the pillar) brings out her present goddess-aspect. She is no longer the huntress but Śiva's consort, the form in which Arjuna had divine *darśana* of *Pināka*pāṇi.

There are two other vertical panels above this which afford interesting study. The topmost shows Śiva in his phallic form (*liṅga*). Being on a line with the corresponding panels on the other sides of the pillar containing the Trimūrti, it seems to suggest by its content (*liṅga*) the culmination of the *Kirātārjunīya* episode and the resultant beatitude of *śiva-sākṣātkāra* and glory. The panel below shows a figure with drawn bow and fixed arrow and with his legs akimbo as in action. The bent bow is held by his left while with his right he is fitting the arrow. The occurrence of this warring archer on the eastern face of the pillar, on a line with the panel on the southern or adjoining face of the pillar showing the left-hander (*Savyasāci*) Arjuna in

[1] *Ibid*, XXXIX, 64-73.
[2] *Ibid*, XXXIX, v. 72.

the same pose, however with the difference that he is fixing the arrow with his left, make the purpose of the sculptor clear. The two archers (*Kirāta* and Arjuna) are arranged opposite to each other and by their tilted angle of shooting suggest that the boar in the panel of Viṣṇu is their target which eventually became their "bone of contention". As south follows east in a four-sided and cardinally arranged pillar, we see that the boar was not only their aim but also that it was a sure shot for Śiva, being more clearly in the range of his arrow than in that of Arjuna. As we know, the boar was killed by Śiva's arrow, a sore point with Arjuna, who accused the *Kirāta* of having deprived him of his quarry.

The details of the story depicted on this pillar of the 9th century A.D. are, as we saw, explained both by the *Mahābhārata* and Bhāravi's versions of the episode. The advent of the Guhyaka (*Yakṣa*) and the defeat of the *gaṇas* bring it nearer to the version of Bhāravi. The sculptor has drawn freely from the *Mahābhārata* but judiciously from Bhāravi—a point which stands for the popularity of the epic as an epic in the minds of the public, as is the case even today, in spite of other poetic or dramatic versions of the tale. The admission of a few details from his (Bhāravi's) version in the carving proves however that he was not forgotten in the 9th century A.D. in the Telugu land.

Śrīśailam

On a line straight west of Vijayawāḍa, right in the centre of South India as it were, lies Śrīśailam, a great religious centre sacred to Śiva, in the inaccessible forests of the Nallamalai hills of the Kurnool district of the Andhradeśa. It is 73 miles north of Nandyal Railway Station of the Southern Rly. The temple of Śiva, locally called Mallikārjuna, appears to have received additions and improvements, when the kings of the Vijayanagara dynasty were reigning. Inscriptions in the temple range from the 14th cent. A.D. to the 17th cent. A.D. Records of the Kākatīya king Pratāparudra of the 14th century, of the Vijayanagara Harihara II (1405 A.D.), Praudhadeva Rāya, Narasiṁha Rāya, Krishṇa-deva Rāya, Chandraśekhara Rāya who as Krishnadeva Rāya's subordinate was governing the Śrīśaila-Rājya and Rāmadeva IV of Karṇāṭa dynasty (17th cent. A.D.) are found in the temple walls which do not take us further back than the 14th century A.D. But the place (Śrīśailam) was celebrated as a place of pilgrimage from very early

times for the following reasons:—(1) the name of the place occurs in the *Mahābhārata*, (2) the *sthalamāhātmya* of the place refers to a princess called Candrāvatī, daughter of a Gupta king called Candragupta, who offered daily a garland of jasmine flowers (*mallikā*) to the god on Śrīśailam hill and eventually married him, (note how local legend connects Śrīśailam with a princess of the Gupta family). (3) Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhist philosophy (1st or 2nd cent. A.D.) is stated to have resided in a monastery in Śrīparvata (Śrīśailam) and died there. (4) The Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hian (399-414 A.D.) and Yuan Chwang (600-654 A.D.) refer to Śrīparvata in their itineraries. (5) Mayūravarman (6th cent A. D.) of the Kadamba dynasty claims to have "occupied the inaccessible forest stretching to the gates of Śrīśailam". (6) The Tamil *Devāram* (7th-8th centuries A.D.) commemorates Śrīśailam. (7) In the 12th century, a subordinate of the ruling Hoysala king fetched liṅga-stones from the bed of the Pātālagaṅgā river at Śrīśailam to instal them in temples built in memory of his parents. Thus the Mallikārjuna temple appears to have been one of the oldest strongholds of Śaivism in Southern India. But what interests us most is that god Mallikārjuna is worshipped by the local hunters, the Chenchus, as one of their own clan under the name *Chenchu Mallayya*. According to a Chenchu legend Śiva came to Śrīśailam as a hunter in hot chase of a wild animal which was also the object (game) of a Chenchu woman, and the animal was killed by both, a moot point of altercation between them that followed the kill. From discussion the two fell in love with each other, got themselves married and from thence the woman was a never failing companion of Śiva in his hunts. This legend is borne out by an interesting bas-relief on the courtyard wall (*prākāra*) of the temple itself[1] in which a tiger is being killed by Śiva with a thrust of his trident and by a forest-woman dressed only in a girdle of leaves, with arrows, while four dogs assist them. Mr. A. H. Longhurst rightly calls the woman Pārvatī[2]. The local forest clan claiming Śiva's wife as a Chenchu-bride, their freedom to enter even the sanctum of the temple, their services in the temple during festivals, and above all the highly catholic form of worship prevailing in Śrīśailam, vouch for the temple the highest place of public attraction and affection. To us, in our

[1] *A.R., A.S.I., S.C.*, 1917-18, pl. III.-b.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 22.

hunt for Arjuna and the *Kirāta*, the *Chenchu Mallayya* of Śrīśailam is of sufficient interest. The local hunters (Chenchus) take the leading part in the processions of the temple, including the *Śivarātri* festivities. The Chenchus are thus the self-appointed guardians of the temple. They are the only inhabitants of the forest area in which Śrīśailam is situated. Also they claim to have defended the temple in the past against an attack by Rohillas. The hunters that the Chenchus are, they recall by their worship the special form of Śiva, the *Kirātamūrti*. In the *Mahābhārata*, Umā (Pārvatī) is said to have accompanied her hunter-lord, in the attire of a huntress. It was so when they came to Arjuna, and the sculpture from Bhuvaneśvar discussed above (pages 23-24) shows them together in all the phases of the "Arjuna-*Kirāta* duel". In the relief on the wall of the Śrīśailam temple discussed above[1] we have probably only the *Kirāta*-aspect of Śiva and Umā, which receives due emphasis by its Chenchu-bride and Chenchu-devotees-association and environment. A similar representation can be noticed in Sankaridrug near Salem in the Tamil district further South.[2]

The relief under description is only one among a large number of bas-reliefs that adorn the outer side of the courtyard walls (*prākāras*) of the temple. These *prākāra* walls are over 20 feet high and the scenes portrayed on them are so varied and so many that a volume alone will do justice to them. The South and the East walls contain the most interesting scenes relating to Śiva's *līlās* and as Longhurst observes they are to the student of Śaivite Iconography a "veritable museum and library rolled into one".[3] Śiva as *Bhikṣāṭana*, as a bridegroom (*Kalyāṇasundara*), as *Natarāja*, as *Gajasaṁhāramūrti*, as *Kālārimūrti*, as Śaṅkara (an aspect of Sūrya) and as *Kirātārjuna-mūrti* deserve special mention. As we are concerned with the last we shall pursue its representation in some detail.

The story of Arjuna's penance occurs in one long panel. The sculptor has drawn mainly from the *Mahābhārata* version and has made full use of the Chenchu-bride association. Umā is shown attired in a girdle of leaves only as also in another panel where a tiger is killed by Śiva with his trident and the Chenchu-bride by her arrows[4]. In both the panels Umā is

[1] *Ibid.*, pl. III(B).
[2] For details see below, p. 107.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[4] *A. R., A. S. I., S. C.*, 1917-18, pl. III-(B).

like a young huntress with bow and arrows in her hands and leaf-scrolls (*patra-kuṇḍalas*) in her ears. She is obviously the local huntress-consort of Śiva, now in the service of her hunter-husband, the *Kirāta* in the latter's mission with Arjuna. We found her so at Bhuvanesvar in Orissa and Vijayawāḍa. The plastic rendering is in three phases without any effort to divide them. On the extreme left Śiva dressed like his wife only with a girdle of leaves, is shooting at the boar, while Umā as a wild huntress with a bow in her left hand stands behind him. Next we move to right where we behold the hand-to-hand-fight or wrestling between Arjuna and Śiva, Arjuna's defeat and Śiva laying Arjuna prostrate and going over or rolling over his body when the wrestling bout terminates. The huntress stands looking on with her right hand raised as though she is exclaiming "enough, enough! stop". Her scroll-*kuṇḍalas*, girdle of leaves and hair arranged fan-wise are noteworthy.

Now we move further right where the vanquished Arjuna is shown twice, first as prostrating himself (*sāṣṭāṅga-namaskāra*) before Śiva and Umā both seated on the bull Nandi, and next as raising himself and standing before the benevolent god and goddess begging for pardon (*Śivāparādha*). Śiva and Umā sit astride, Umā behind Śiva, on the bull and indicate the happy end of the story, when Arjuna obtained the *Pāśupatāstra*. We do not meet the four-handed form of Śiva in this panel. The bull, Nandi, with several rows of jingling bells (*kiṅkiṇī*) recalls a feature popular in Vijayanagara art. The paneling and style of the sculptures on the high courtyard walls (*prākāras*) bring to our mind the Hazāra Rāma temple in Vijayanagara (Hampi ruins) in the Bellary district as a parallel.[1] The famous Vijayanagara king Krishnadeva Rāya visited the Śrīśailam temple about 1514 A.D. and made many endowments to the temple. In the same year he built in his capital the Hazāra Rāma temple. The remarkable similarity between the walls of the two temples and their sculptures suggest a similar date for both. Perhaps the same sculptors worked at both places. Mr. Longhurst suggests that probably Krishnadeva Rāya deputed some of his own sculptors from Vijayanagara to decorate the Śrīśailam walls in the style of the Hazāra Rāma temple wall.[2]. The work

[1] A. H. Longhurst, *Hampi Ruins*, p. 74, fig. 29.

[2] Longhurst in *A.R., A.S.I., S.C.*, 1917-18, p. 80, Pl. XI.

at Śrīśailam occupied several years and was never completed and that was the reason perhaps why there is no inscription at Śrīśailam to give us the name of the king or author of the decorations on the Śrīśailam walls. But the style of workmanship and the striking resemblance between the Hazāra Rāma and Śrīśailam temple wall decorations indicate the same date for both, viz, the first half of the 16th century A.D., when Krishnadeva Rāya (1510-1529 A.D.) was reigning over a big kingdom with Vijayanagara (modern Hampi ruins) as his capital.

Yaganṭi

Seventy miles south-west of Śrīśailam and eight miles west of Banganapalli town is Yaganṭi. The local temple dedicated to Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara has an interesting stone-built tank with a *maṇḍapa* all round. Along the inner frieze of this tank are sculptured panels with scenes drawn from the *līlās* of Śiva including the *Kirātārjunīya*. Like Śrīśailam, this temple acquires importance on the *Śivarātri* night when it becomes the seat of a grand festival. There are in the temple Telugu inscriptions of the 14th and 15th centuries A.D., while its main *Gopura* is in the characteristic Vijayanagara style of the 15th century A.D.

The frieze which contains the *Kirātārjunīya* scenes is broken at the beginning. Proceeding from proper right to left, we find that the frieze depicts the wild boar moving towards Arjuna as in attacking. Arjuna stands in front of it with drawn bow and arrow and as having moved out of an elevated place on the top of the hill where he was presumably doing penance beside a tree. His unbraided locks of hair as in flowing *jaṭās*, mark him out as the *tapasvī* Arjuna (pl.....a). Behind the attacking boar can be seen a man standing (front view). Only his left hand holding a bow and left thigh can be made out, the rest being broken and missing. The front view coupled with the static attitude of the bow may perhaps suggest that the figure meant was of Arjuna in the earlier stage of his agitation when on seeing the boar, he wondered if he should move out of his place and kill it or refrain from using the arrow as he was in the midst of a penance. Proceeding to the left (proper) we can read in the carving the story from the time when Śiva enters the arena as a hunter accompanied by Pārvati as a huntress and his *gaṇas* also in hunters' attire. There is no attempt made to divide the panels, the idea of division being

suggested by turning the figures away from each other as at Bhuvaneśvar. Śiva is shown as marching first followed by two hunters with their kill suspended on sticks which they are carrying on their shoulders. Pārvatī is shown between Śiva and the hunters. Śiva is holding by the leash three hunting dogs which are springing. Śiva and Pārvatī wear on their heads a *tiara* of feathers each. The hunters have secured their hair in top knots. While the bow hangs inactive on the right arm of Śiva, Pārvatī holds a bow in her left hand and a thick arrow in her right hand. Proceeding left (proper), we note that Mūkāsura in the form of a wild boar is shown amidst the hunting dogs, while Śiva and Pārvatī are shown as standing beside. The idea suggested is that the dogs held under the leash by Śiva in the earlier scene are let loose and have approached the target, Mūkāsura in the present case.

The story now continues in the middle of the frieze where Arjuna and Śiva as *Kirata* are engaged in their wordy battle over the kill, namely, the boar. The boar which is dead is shown as lying turtle while the spirit of Mūkāsura with hands folded in worship is issuing out of the carcase. Śiva and Pārvatī stand to the proper right of the dead boar. Both hold bows in their left hands. Arjuna has extended his hand towards Śiva as though in argument. The physical duel that followed the wordy battle is represented on the proper left where Arjuna and the hunter fight first with bow-sticks, and then when Arjuna lost his bow to Śiva fight with hands and fists as in wrestling and boxing. Next we find the pair down on the ground. We can make out in the sculpture Arjuna having fallen on his back and Śiva pressing him down in the act of pressing his breath out and thereby vanquishing Arjuna. Pārvatī is standing beside the wrestlers keenly watching the scene. In her left hand she holds a bow while with her right hand she suggests *varada* or benevolence. The idea is that she is all out for her Lord (Śiva) to release Arjuna and bless him. What followed is represented next on the proper left. Arjuna is shown as beholding with divine eyes Śiva and Pārvatī in their divine form. With the bow suspended on his right shoulder, with his hands folded in *añjali* and with meekness and devotion he beholds Śiva and Pārvatī as seated on the bull *vāhana* (vṛṣabhārūḍha). Śiva is here in the act of blessing him, while his raised right hand suggests the award of the *Pāśupata-astra*. The *Mahābhārata* and other versions of the story of

Arjuna's penance record that the other two members of the Trinity as well as the *Lokapālas* were also present on the occasion. They are shown in the sculpture behind Śiva and Pārvatī, in the order of Viṣṇu supported by Garuḍa, Brahmā on his swan, Indra on his elephant and Agni on a ram. The other Lokapālas are missing as the part of the sculpture which showed them is broken.

The style of the carving and the details of the story are very much similar to what we find in the temple of Vīrabhadra at Lepākṣi (see below, pp. 42-8) where the story of Arjuna's penance is elaborately carved and painted. Lepākṣi is 116 miles south south-west of Yaganṭi. Like the Lepākṣi carvings the frieze of Yaganṭi may date from the 16th century A.D.

Lepākṣī

When the kings of the Vijayanagara dynasty were ruling in Hampi (14th-16th century A.D.), Lepākṣi, nine miles from Hindupur in the Anantapur district was a great centre of pilgrimage. On a small rocky hillock called *Kūrmaśaila* stands the sacred shrine of Śiva as Vīrabhadra which was developed into a big temple by the untiring and pious zeal of a merchant-prince, Virūpaṇṇa by name, the worthy son of one Nandilakkiśeṭṭi of Penukoṇḍa. He and his brother Vīraṇṇa Nāyak were the makers of Lepākṣi.

Inscriptions of the time of the Vijayanagara king Acyutarāya inscribed on the walls of this temple give us some particulars about the place. Three shrines are mentioned in them. The shrine of Śiva faces that of Viṣṇu while further up in the centre is the *sanctum* of Śrī Vīrabhadra, the patron deity of the Nāyak brothers.

The most interesting and beautiful part of the temple is the large hall or *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* in front of the shrine. This contains over sixty large sculptured stone pillars and a painted ceiling. The whole ceiling (including the stone beams and bracket-capitals supporting the roof) was originally painted. The *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* is a charming piece of work with dancing figures, drummers and divine musicians carved on its pillars. An inner *maṇḍapa* contains elegant carvings of Gajāntakamūrti, Tāṇḍavagaṇapati, Durgā and two figures of "ideal man and woman" as conceived by the sculptor.

The walls of the small *sanctum* of Vīrabhadra, the ceiling of the Viṣṇu

or Raghunātha shrine and that of the part of the *maṇḍapa* adjoining the Śiva sanctuary are full of paintings which generally go unnoticed. Those on the ceiling of the Viṣṇu shrine are interesting representations of the ten incarnations (*avatārs*) of Viṣṇu painted around a central panel of seated Viṣṇu.

For one who is more attracted by line and colour than by relief and volume there is nothing so interesting in this temple as the *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* and the *mukha-maṇḍapa* next to it. The painters of the Vijayanagara court who worked here had an excellent sense of form and pose. The lines have been drawn in sure and unswerving strokes. The portrait paintings of the donors Virūpaṇṇa and his brother, with their retinue, are most important from the historical point of view. The colours used here are simple, the colour scheme being composed of red, blue, yellow, green, black and white. The different shades are laid on without any complex blending.

The subjects painted or carved are drawn from the Epics, the *Purāṇas* and the *Āgamas*. Such are for instance, "Arjuna marrying Draupadī", "Arjuna's penance", "Arjuna obtaining *Pāśupatāstra* from Śiva", "Story of Śīrāḷa and Śiruttoṇḍa-Nāyanār", "Śiva coming out of his liṅga-form and saving Mārkaṇḍeya from Yama", "Kālasaṁhāra-mūrti", "Yoga-Dakṣiṇā-mūrti", "Bhikṣāṭana", "Hari-Hara", "Umāsahita", "Ardhanārīśvara", "Kalyāṇasundara or Śiva's marriage", "Tripurāntaka", "Gaṅgādhara", "Naṭarāja", "Candraśekhara", "Pārvatī", "Vaṭapatraśāyin", "Manu Cola giving justice to an aggrieved cow", "Śiva and Pārvatī playing chess", "Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa", "Rāma and Sītā", "the Avatārs of Viṣṇu", "the merchant Virūpaṇṇa worshipping the god" and "Vīrabhadra".

As we are concerned with the story of Arjuna, let us examine the carvings and paintings in this temple which deal with it. The subject is carved in continuous panels on the plinth of the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* and reads from right to left (plate III). The temple being a great Śaiva shrine, attracts large crowds during temple festivities. Consequently the walls had been receiving periodical colour and white-washing that had completely covered up the carved panels. After diligent scraping the writer was able to expose them generally and in particular six panels completely and satisfactorily which are reproduced here (plate III).

The subject-matter of the carving is after Bhāravi's version mostly. It

begins at the right end of the western face of the wall of the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* and shows Sage Vyāsa (Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana) visiting the Pāṇḍava brothers in their exile in Dvaita-vana. He is seated on a raised platform, and addressing Dharmaputra (i.e. Yudhiṣṭira) who is seated facing him on the same platform. Bhīma with his *gadā* leaning on his left shoulder, Arjuna with his *gāṇḍīva* resting on his left shoulder, Nakula with bow like Arjuna's and Sahadeva with his hands in *añjali* stand in a row behind Dharmaputra and appear to listen with rapt attention to what Vyāsa is narrating. Vyāsa with his left hand bent and resting firmly on his thigh and with his right hand raised in *tarjanī* appears to encourage or assure the Pāṇḍavas by some proposal. Bhāravi tells us that Vyāsa assured them that he had come specially to impart to them a spell (*vidyā*) in the nature of *Indra-mantra* which will give them fulfilment of their desires[1]. To Arjuna, who beckoned by Ajātaśatru to "go and do the needful", approached Vyāsa, the sage gave the *mantra* and the advice to perform *tapas* and please Indra on the Indrakīla hill to which a Guhyaka (Yakṣa) would lead him[2]. In the carving Dharmaputra is shown as engaged in the discussion with Vyāsa, while the brothers are watching and listening with different reactions. Bhīma, the foremost is all eagerness and all resentment at the way their brother Dharmaputra had let them down. It must be remembered that Bhīma and Draupadī were actually subjecting Dharmaputra to a volley of censures in Dvaitavana when sage Vyāsa entered the scene for the purpose described above. Hence the pose of Bhīma suits the context. Arjuna who stands behind Bhīma is full of self control (*vinaya*). His hands are folded in *añjali*. The sculptor has done justice to Bhāravi's description of him as the "hope of Ajātaśatru" and the saviour of the Pāṇḍava prestige and glory. Both in the *Mahābhārata* and

[1] *Kirātārjunīya*, 3rd *sarga*, v. 23—
Dātuṁ pradānocita=bhūridhāmnīm=upāgataḥ siddhim=ivāsmi vidyām ‖

[2] *Ibid.* 3rd *sarga*, vv. 24-29—
Ityuktavantaṁ vraja sādhayeti pramāṇayan vākyam=Ajātaśatroḥ |
Prasedivāṁsaṁ taṁ=upāsasāda vasannivānte vinayena Jiṣṇuḥ ‖24‖

* * * * * * * *

Niyojayiṣyan vijayodaye taṁ tapassamādhau munirityuvāca ‖27‖
Kariṣyase yatra suduṣkarāṇi prasattaye Gotrabhidas=tapāṁsi |
Śiloccayaṁ cāruśiloccayaṁ tam=eṣa kṣaṇān=neṣyati Guhyakas=tvām‖29‖

Bhāravi's work, Arjuna is noted for valour, prudence, fortitude and *vinaya*. Like Arjuna, the twins behind Arjuna (Nakula and Sahadeva) have their hands in *añjali*, and not having any independent role to play, take to *vinaya* leaving all activity to their illustrious brother Arjuna. Arjuna was distinguished among the brothers for *vinaya* and the other qualities noted above; hence his selection as the hero of the story.

The next scene takes place on the left of Vyāsa. The frieze is continuous but the story has been worked into it in convenient panels, the demarcations being suggested by turning away the figures occurring at the ends. The same was the case with the relief from the Svarṇajvāleśvara temple at Bhuvaneśvar (see above, page 23). Arjuna who stands on the left takes leave of Dharmaputra who with his raised right hand is administering parting advice and precepts to his beloved Arjuna, "his hope", and "the apple of his eye".[1]

Equipped with bow, arrows, sword, and necessary armour (*kavaca*) Arjuna took leave of his brother and followed the Guhyaka to Indrakīla on the Himālayas.[2] Arjuna's characteristic *vinaya* and abject devotion to Dharmaputra's words are expressed by the pose of his hands which are folded in worship before his brother while his whole frame of body leans forward out of reverence for his brother.

The story continues in the third panel where the panel-effect has been created by turning away the figures at the ends. Arrived at Indrakīla hill, thanks to the Guhyaka guide, who in the frieze is not shown, Arjuna started severe austerities. In the sculpture we see him at the extreme right end marching intently. His *gāṇḍīva* rests on his left shoulder. In front of him is a shrine with a *liṅga* installed in it, which he is approaching. Next he is shown on the left—the *liṅga*-shrine occurs again—worshipping Śiva (as *liṅga*) in the *āgamic* way, viz, *ṣoḍaśopacāra*, waving lights (*dīpa*), burning incense (*dhūpa*) before the god and so on. His right hand waves an incense burner (*dhūpa*) before the *liṅga*; his left hand holds an *akṣamālā*. The bow rests on his left shoulder. Bhāravi says that the

[1] *Kirātārjuniyam*, 3rd *sarga*, v. 24—
* * * vraja sādhayeti pramāṇayan vākyaṁ Ajātaśatroḥ |

[2] *Ibid.*, 3rd *sarga*, vv. 57-59.



a.



b.

gāṇḍīva never left him in his *vrata* till Śiva deprived him of it at the end. A crown (*kirīṭa-makuṭa*) and long garland give him dignity. The worship of Śiva at this stage is not referred to by Bhāravi or in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhārata-caṁpū*. The introduction of the shrine and the worshipping Arjuna is perhaps to suggest that the place is Indrakīla on Mount Himavat. And Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva, is, as we know on a part of Himavān. Arjuna who was advised by Vyāsa to observe the life of *munis* (*munīnām ācāram*) and devote himself to meditation (*tapassamādhī*), prayer and ceremonial purification is perhaps doing *pūjā* to the Śiva-*liṅga* in the *bona fide* belief that such action came under the purview of Vyāsa's advice. The scene is a sufficient proof of the sculptor's ingenuity and in keeping with the spirit of a popular temple such as the Vīrabhadra temple has continued to be from the days of the Vijayanagara kings (16th century A.D.).

To the right of the shrine is the next panel in which Arjuna is depicted as engaged in a severe penance beside a tree (Pl. III-a). Standing on one leg (the right leg), with the left leg bent, his hands are raised aloft and arranged in a pose convenient to behold the blazing Sūrya as in *Sūryopasthāna*. With spreading matted locks, Arjuna's representation follows Bhāravi's.[1] This time the bow (gāṇḍīva) and quiver are shown not in association with him but beside him between the tree and Arjuna. His hair is shown as long flowing matted locks answering Bhāravi's description as "abhiraśmimāli" and "udīritāruṇajaṭāmśuṁ". The long flowing locks reveal the decorative style of the Vijayanagara art, with which we are familiar in our study of the images of dancing Śiva or Naṭarāja. While Arjuna is engaged in penance in the manner described above, two celestial nymphs (*sura-sundarīs*) are shown dancing on the left and trying to tempt him by their charms. The dress and ornamentation of these nymphs, including a loose *uttarīya* elegantly adjusted on the shoulder with due care to expose their breasts and their high *keśa-bandha* (coiffure) of the *dhammila*

[1] *Kirātārjunīyam*, 12th *sarga*—
Abhiraśmimāli.....ekacaraṇam niṣīdataḥ‖2‖
Parikīrṇam=udyatabhujasya bhuvanavivare durāsadam |
Jyotirupari śiraso vitataṁ jagṛhe nijānmuni=divaukasām pathaḥ ‖11‖
Tamudīritāruṇajaṭāṁśum=adhiguṇaśarāsanaṁ janāḥ |
Rudram=anuditalalāṭadṛśaṁ dadṛśuḥ mimanthiṣum=ivāsurīḥ purīḥ‖14‖

variety (chignon) show them to be served in the best Vijayanagara style.[1] The story is that Indra, being informed by Guhyakas of Arjuna's penance, sent his nymphs to test his strength of mind (*niyamasthiratām*).[2] Being foiled by Arjuna's indifference to them and their love attempts they returned to Indra to give him a report of their own defeat.

Pleased as he was with their report, Indra goes to Arjuna disguised as an old *muni* (Pl. III-b). This part of the story is described above (see page 13). In the next panel of the carving Arjuna is shown between two trees in the same pose of penance as we saw him in the previous panel. The flowing matted locks are here pronouncedly decorative as in Naṭarāja images of the Vijayanagara period. Besides armlets, wristlets, anklets and a waist-girdle, an *uttarīya* tied round his waist is suggested by its end hanging low between Arjuna's legs. His bow and quiver of arrows rest on the ground to his right and lean on the tree. What appear to be balls arranged like a hill below Arjuna's legs may indicate that it is the hill, Indrakīla, the scene of Arjuna's penance. Or are they the fallen fruits, that Arjuna collected and partook, as the *Mahābhārata* says, every third night in the first month of his penance, every 6th night in the second month, every 15th night in the third month and once only in the fourth month and so on? Bhāravi tells us that the entire Indrakīla hill was out to serve Arjuna, trees bending low to bring within Arjuna's reach their fruits.[3] Additional strength is rendered to the "fruit-theory" by the scene that we find portrayed on the left of Arjuna. The tree is shown again with Arjuna on the right and Indra disguised as the old *muni* on the left. The old *muni* is bent with age, has *jaṭās* secured in a big knot; he has a beard and carries a spread parasol in his right hand while with his left hand outstretched he is evidently giving Arjuna a big sermon on *mokṣa*, and an admonition for resorting to austerities even as a youth, yet clinging to weapons of war which he had taken care to keep

[1] *Cf.* Hazāra Rama temple and King's Siṁhāsana in *Guide to Hampi and Vijayanagar*, 1941, figs. 8 & 14.

[2] Bhāravi, *Sarga* 6, v. 39.

[3] Bhāravi, 6th *sarga*, v. 34—

Itaretarān=abhibhavena mṛgās=tam=upāsate gurum=ivāntasadaḥ|
Vinamanti cāsya taravaḥ pracaye paravān satena bhavateva nagaḥ ||

by his side and which were definitely opposed to *tapas*.[1] Indra's comments on Arjuna's bow, sword, armour and quiver as incongruous to the spirit of penance are definitely suggested by their emphatic display in the carving beside Arjuna. Bhāravi says that Arjuna was drawn to the old sage even at first sight, gave him *ātithya* and *apaciti* and removing his fatigue requested him to sit in *viṣṭara* under the tree and then speak.[2] The fruits displayed by the side of Arjuna no doubt figured in the *pūjā* (*apaciti*) and *ātithya* (*arghya, pādya, ācamanīya*) with which he entertained the pseudo-*muni*. A *kuṇḍikā* with a *sthālī* placed on it shown between Indra and Arjuna denotes the *ātithya*, and the fruits the *apaciti* and the tree the *viṣṭara* or *vṛkṣāsana* that the sage received at Arjuna's hands. With his feet cleansed, his fatigue (*adhvaśrama*) removed by the fruits and the *viṣṭara*, the sage was invited to speak. The ball-like objects on Arjuna's right are too big for fruits and too small for a hill. If they stand for a hill then the verse of the pseudo-muni "viviktesmin nage bhūyaḥ plāvite Janhukanyayā| pratyāsīdati muktis-tvāṁ purā mā bhūr=udāyudhaḥ||" (11th *sarga*, verse 36) and Arjuna's fitting reply "Vicchinnā-bhravilāyaṁ vā vilīye nagamūrdhani| Ārādhya vā Sahasrākṣaṁ ayaśaḥ śalyam=uddhare||" (V. 79) may both be taken to refer to it.

Arjuna's declaration to die on the hill-top or pull out (with Indra's help) the arrow of disgrace from his heart pleased Indra, who forthwith revealed to his son (Arjuna) his real godly form[3] and advised him to concentrate his penance on Pinākī (Śiva) from that moment and seek fulfilment of his desires at the hands of Śiva (Pl. III-b). We find this scene portrayed in the sculpture to the left of the figure of the old pseudo-*muni*. Indra appears in his *divya-mūrti*, with four hands, the upper hands holding *vajra* and *śakti*, the lower left hanging down and the lower right indicating to Arjuna *abhaya* or protection. The iconography of Indra credits him with *śakti* and *aṅkuśa* in his hands according to one text, and with *vajra, aṅkuśa* and *padma* or

[1] Bhāravi, 11th *sarga*, v. 10, 15, 16, 17, 36.

[2] *Ibid.* 11th *sarga*—

Ātitheyīm=athāsādya sutādapacitiṁ Hariḥ |
Viśramya viṣṭare nāma vyājahāreti bhāratīm || 9

[3] Bhāravi, 11th *sarga*, v. 80—*āviṣkṛtadivyamūrtiḥ*.

nīlotpala and *akṣamālā* and *kamaṇḍalu* according to other texts.[1] While *vajra* is clear in his upper right hand, *śakti* in Indra's upper left looks more like a sword, but with a blade too broad to be a sword. Sometimes *śakti* in Subrahmaṇya's hands is shown as in the present case. Indra's lower right hand is in *abhaya-mudrā*, while the lower left holds something probably a *kamaṇḍalu* or *akṣamālā*. Arjuna stands in front of Indra with his characteristic *vinaya*, folding his hands in worship (*añjali*) and listening carefully to Indra's advice. The *kirīṭamakuṭa* on head, long garland, bow on left shoulder and full garments, etc. depict him as the Pāṇḍava prince Arjuna in the short interval of his drama, between his penance to Indra and his more severe penance to Śiva to follow.

The panel continues on the north wall of the *mukhamaṇḍapa*. Owing to very thick overcoatings of white-wash and colour-wash that the wall had been receiving periodically I could not get good photographs but the details of carving as were sufficiently clear for identification, after necessary scraping of white-wash and cleaning are recorded below:—

The story proceeds from right to left. There is no division into panels, such division being suggested by turning away the figures occurring at the ends. First Arjuna is shown as continuing his penance, standing on one leg and in the same pose in which Indra found him. Next he is shown as engaged in an altercation with the *Kirāta* (Śiva), while Mūkāsura in the form of a boar is shown standing behind the disputers. Arjuna was preparing to shoot it when he was interrupted by the *Kirāta* who forbade him to strike his game. The boar is obviously the game and the "bone of contention" in the panel.

The next phase of the story is detailed in the adjoining panel, where both Arjuna and *Kirāta*, each with bow in hand, stand on either side of the dead boar turned turtle and with an arrow stuck to its body, as in the frieze from Svarṇajvāleśvara temple, Bhuvaneśvar. Turning a deaf ear to the *Kirāta's* protest, Arjuna shot the boar and so did the *Kirāta*, and the boar rolled over dead. This gave rise to an altercation which brought on a personal combat.

[1] T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 518-520.

When Arjuna had expended all his arrows on the *Kirāta* without any effect and eventually fought with the bow and lost his bow too to his foe, he took to his sword and the two fenced till Arjuna's sword broke. In the next panel Arjuna and the *Kirāta* are engaged in fighting with bows and Arjuna eventually lost his bow to his foe. Then Arjuna tore up rocks and hills to hurl at his foe, but they fell harmless at the *Kirāta's* feet. This so enraged Arjuna that he began to engage the *Kirāta* in a hand-to-hand fight, which is the subject matter of the succeeding panel. Arjuna is shown as fallen and the *Kirāta* is shown above or over him marking thereby the end of the wrestling, while Umā attired as a huntress, stands behind the combatants watching the feud. As in Śrīśailam she is stooping forward as though watching the back of the uppermost person of the pair. The temple priest Sri Ramachandra Ayyah explained to me that there is a local version of the story according to which the uppermost person is Arjuna, the person below him is the *Kirāta*, Umā (Pārvatī) who stoops forward is only observing a mole which Arjuna was credited to have on his back and that Umā got a chance coveted but denied to others to see this mole on Arjuna's back which was supposed to bring Arjuna victory (*jaya*). In the absence of textual authority, this version has to be abandoned and the person uppermost has to be identified as the *Kirāta* even as we found him in the Śrīśailam panel (see above, page 38). According to the story Arjuna was vanquished. Umā's watching from behind may just mean that either she is watching the result of wrestling, if Arjuna's breath has been pressed out or not, or that she is calling a halt by telling her lord (the *Kirāta*) "enough, please, stop".

In the next panel the celestials blow conches (*śaṅkha* and *dundubhi-dhvani*) and announce the end of the combat and Arjuna's temporary discomfiture but spiritual victory. The daring audacity of Arjuna's act in offering battle to Śiva, and his determination and courage surprised the heavenly beings, the inhabitants of the etherial regions, the beasts of the forest and the birds of the sky who all flocked alike to witness the contest, which was terminated by the *Kirāta* revealing himself as Śiva and bestowing on Arjuna the boon he wanted, viz, the *Pāśupatāstra*. The panel with the gods blowing conches is followed by another and the last in the "*Kirāt-ārjuna*" series, in which Arjuna is given *divyacakṣus* or divine eyes to behold the *Kirāta* transformed into Śiva and the huntress into Śiva's consort Umā.

The god and goddess are seated on the bull-*vāhana* (*vṛṣabhārūḍha*), while Arjuna, now dressed as a prince and with his *gāṇḍīva* restored to him, is receiving from Śiva *pāśupatāstra*.

The next series of carvings on the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* relate to the story of the Śaiva saint Śiruttoṇḍa Nāyanār (a contemporary of Tirujñāna Sambandha) who in his earlier days served as a military officer under the Pallava king Narasiṁhavarman I and took part in the battle of Vātāpi in about A.D. 642. Yet another place in South India where both Śiruttoṇḍar and Śiva as *Kirātamūrti* figure as the subject of carvings as in Lepāksi is Tirucceṅgāṭṭāṅkuḍi, seven miles south-east of Nannilam Rly. Station, in Tanjore district[1].

Lepākṣi, as remarked above, is one of the rare temples of the Vijayanagara period, where the same story is the theme of both carving and painting. And the story of Arjuna is painted over 4 bays of the ceiling of the *Nāṭya-maṇḍapa* of the temple. Bay No. 1 which runs from east to west shows Arjuna marrying Draupadī. King Drupada, with his daughter on his lap is watching Arjuna shoot down a fish (target) kept above, not by direct aim but by observing its shadow in water below—an unrivalled performance in archery, which won him the hand of Draupadī. Kṛṣṇa can be seen behind Arjuna as though he is encouraging him. Next Arjuna is shown beside Draupadī marrying her, while Kṛṣṇa blesses the couple with uplifted arms, which is a normal pose in blessing. The colours employed are black, yellow, brown, light blue and white. No more scene from Arjuna's life is shown in Bay No. 1; the other scenes in this bay relate to Śiva as Bhikṣāṭana.

The adjoining bays, Nos. 2 and 3, are full of paintings illustrating Vaṭapatraśāyin or Mukunda as child lying on a banyan leaf, Śiva as Vīrabhadra being worshipped by Virūpaṇṇa and his brother Vīraṇṇa in Bay No. 2, and Śiva as Kalyāṇasundara marrying Pārvatī as Mīnākṣī in Bay No. 3.

[1] For details see below, p. 95.
Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, p. 216 and Pl. LII, fig. 1.

The first half of Bay No. 4 shows the continuation of the marriage of Kalyāṇa-sundara. Mīnākṣī (Pārvatī), with four hands, is standing before Śiva while Nārada, Bhṛṅgī, Triśiras and Tumburu are singing. Śiva and Pārvatī are then seen seated on their bull-*vāhana* (*vṛsabhārūḍha*) giving *darśana* to a sage who comes out of his seat of penance on a hill and prostrates before Śiva and Pārvatī. The panels adjoining this, in this bay, contain scenes drawn from "Arjuna's penance". As such the sage prostrating may at first sight be taken to be Arjuna. But since he is issuing out of a pose of penance in which he was sitting cross-legged and as he is a sage without the bow and other warlike weapons, the person intended was not Arjuna but perhaps some sage to whom Śiva as Kalyāṇa-sundara appears and confers boons.

Though the other half of Bay No. 4 contains scenes from "Arjuna's penance", they appear to begin only with the advent of Mūkāsura. But the earlier events are painted on Bay No. 6, then on Bay 4 and then on Bay No. 5 in an intelligent order very much similar to that of the carvings in the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* studied above (see pages 42-50).

Bay No. 6, where the immediate continuity of the story is perceptible, is now described. The story is in convenient panels. First we notice sage Kṛṣṇa-Dvaipāyana or Vyāsa addressing the Pāṇḍavas and advising Dharmaputra to send Arjuna to Indrakīla for propitiating Indra by penance. Commissioned thus, Arjuna next takes leave of his brothers and departs. In the following panel he is shown as worshipping a Śiva-*liṅga* in the same manner as we saw him in the carving of the same subject on the western wall of the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* (see above, page 44). Next we find him engaged in austerities (meditation, prayer, ceremonial purification) and penance. He is standing on one leg with his arms raised above. Being informed of his penance by a Guhyaka[1], Indra sends his celestial nymphs to tempt Arjuna and to test his constancy and strength of mind[2]. Two panels are devoted to

[1] Bhāravi informs us that the forest-dwelling Guhyakas go to Indra and inform him—see *Kirātārjunīya*, 6th *sarga*, vv. 29, 30, 38.

[2] Bhāravi, 6th *sarga*, vv. 38, 39.

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this event. In one a Guhyaka is informing Indra of Arjuna's penance. In the other Indra's nymphs are dancing before Arjuna who is engaged in penance, standing on one leg. The futility of the temptation efforts of his nymphs is duly reported to Indra by his Guhyaka, and thereupon Indra resolves to visit Arjuna. This forms the subject matter of the succeeding panel. Though according to Bhāravi no Guhyaka goes to Indra to report the defeat of the nymphs but only the nymphs themselves accompanied by Gandharvas[1], we can justify the introduction of the Guhyaka, firstly because Indra was informed by Guhyakas only of Arjuna's doing penance which made him send the nymphs, and secondly by Bhāravi's admission that the defeat of the nymphs was reported to Indra by Gandharvas also. Guhyakas are Yakṣas, while Gandharvas[2] are celestial musicians. The painter perhaps felt justified in showing a Yakṣa[3] in the place of the Gandharva as to him both were demi-gods or secondary gods, at any rate distinct from the terrestrials. Also his fancy for the Gandharva instead of for a Yakṣa can be appreciated when we find the epics and relevant literature recording how celestial nymphs out to tempt *munis* and penitents under Indra's orders utilised often the services of Gandharvas[3] who were the musicians of the celestial world. In this connection it is worth recalling how Urvaśī utilised the services of the Gandharva-chief Citrasena when Indra commissioned her to wait on Arjuna and please him, when the latter was on a visit to Indra at Indra's bidding, after obtaining the *Pāśupatāstra*[3]. Or the sage-like person standing before Indra may be Nārada, who is one of the celestial musicians.

In the following panel of Bay No. 6 Indra being apprised of the defeat of his nymphs by a Gandharva (is he Nārada?) appears before Arjuna in his godly form and Arjuna, receives him with all the respect he bore him and prostrates before him (*namaskaroti*). In the painting one can notice the painter's tendency to hurry through the details and present only the main events. Thus Indra's appearance first as an old *muni* does not occur in the

[1] Bhāravi, 10th *sarga*, v. 63—
Sagandharvā dhāma Tridaśavanitāḥ svaṁ pratiyayuḥ||

[2] T. N. Ramachandran, *Archaeological discoveries along Mainamati and Lalmai Ranges*, p. 222 [B. C. Law Volume, Part II.]

[3] *Mahābhārata, Indralokagamana parva*, XLII.



a.



b.

painting though it occurred in the carving on the *Mukhamaṇḍapa*. The painter is evidently out to show the later episodes such as Arjuna's combat with Śiva as *Kirāta* in some detail as we shall see presently. For bay 6 closes with one more scene in which, acting on Indra's advice Arjuna goes back to his penance, this time to be more severe than before and addressed to Pināki (Śiva). He is shown again in his characteristic penitent pose of standing on one leg, hands upraised while his *gāṇḍīva* rests by his side.

We have now to go back to the second half of Bay No. 4 for the continuity of the story. To the proper right of a sage seated in penance on a hill, who can readily be taken for Arjuna had it not been for his crosslegged seated pose, is a long panel of painting in a good state of preservation and with all colours present (Plate IV). The story is after the *Mahābhārata* version. In the centre, on a mountain top, meant to be Kailāsa sits Śiva as a hunter with Umā as a huntress seated on his lap (Pl. IV-a). Umā's right hand holds an arrow and encircles the back of Śiva as in embrace, while her left hand holds a bow. Feathers are tucked to their heads fan-wise as hunters are wont to decorate themselves. Śiva is in black colour except for his forehead (*lalāṭa*) which is white suggesting that it is smeared with the sacred ash (*bhasma*). And Umā is white. Both wear on their person beads in profusion and white chowries in the shape of necklaces, armlets and wristlets. Both are represented as looking down on the world from their snow-clad abode. Following the direction of their eyes we come upon a scene of animation on the left where an infuriated boar of exaggerated size, black and with side tusks (*daṁṣṭrā*) is leaping over rocks and advancing rapidly while affrighted animals such as spotted deer, jackals, pigs etc., are scattered helter-skelter in the forest marking the resultant pandemonium. Six sages with black beards are shown running away to escape the onslaught of the boar (Pl. IV-b). Two of the sages have dropped down in their flight, while two others including one nearmost to the boar are attempting to ward off or scare away the advancing boar by raising their arms. Behind the boar, or to speak correctly, between the boar and Mt. Kailāsa on which Śiva and Umā are seated observing, is a party of four *Kirātas* with bows and arrows pursuing the boar (Mūka). One of them (the front one) wears a girdle of leaves and is actually engaged in shooting the boar with an arrow adjusted in his drawn bow. He is of dimunitive size when compared to the other three of his party, the idea suggested being one of distance. The small

figure is very far away from the other three, who are near to the spectator, just advancing, while their bows are at rest in their left hands. The difference in their dress may be noted. Each of the four wears a coronet of feathers on the head. The bigger three wear regular under-garments with upper-garments fastened on them, while the small man (rendered small by distance) wears only a girdle of leaves. All the four wear shoes presumably of leather, being *Kirātas*, and this feature distinguishes them from the fleeing group of sages on the extreme left who are bare-footed. A fallen deer with a fox behind it, a parrot and a cobra can also be made out in that part of the painting wherein figures the advancing boar.

Coming back to Śiva and Umā in Kailāsa we find that they are shown thrice as pairs. First they are seated on Mt. Kailāsa in the manner described above. Next they stand behind on Mt. Kailāsa itself (Pl. IV-a), both with bows, Śiva being black and Umā white, and Umā pointing with her outstretched hand evidently at the scene below Mt. Kailāsa, *viz.*, the advance of Mūkāsura as a boar. That her object of indication is Mūkāsura is proved by the figure of a little man, evidently a boy, sitting on the top of an adjoining tree and pointing with his right hand at the advancing Mūkāsura. The boy's hair is arranged in an elegant top-knot (*keśa-bandha*) and he is dressed with white shorts and black *uttarīya* fastened to his waist, while ornaments including anklets (*nūpuras*) are in evidence. Is he Kumāra, the *Senānīḥ* who with the agility of a boy climbs a tree nearby and points to his parents the scenes below or perhaps in the world below including the advancing demon Mūka in the shape of a boar[1]. That Kumāra or *Senānīḥ* finds a good share in this story is emphasised by Bhāravi who in the 15th *sarga* introduces him as exhorting the *Gaṇas* that donning the attires of *Kirātas* followed Śiva but took to their heels as soon as the first arrows of Arjuna issued from his *gāṇḍīva* in the momentous "Arjuna-*Kirāta* combat". He took them to task[2] for their weakness (*klaibya*) and goaded them back to Indrakīla and to their chief, Śiva, the *Kirāta*[3]. Kumāra also occurs, (but still younger), in the representation of

[1] Bhāravi, 15th *sarga*, v. 29.

[2] Bhāravi, 15th *sarga*, v. 19.

[3] Bhāravi, 15th *sarga*, v. 29.

Arjuna's penance in the Bṛhadīśvara temple, Tanjore, where Umā accompanies Śiva with Kumāra as a child seated on her hip[1].

Śiva and Umā as hunters are shown a third time on the extreme right end of the panel, where they are seen walking or marching (Pl. IV-b). Feathers tucked fan-like to their heads, girdle of leaves over shorts and leather shoes bring out their *Kirāta*-attire prominently, while *kuṇḍalas* in the ears, many necklaces, armlets and wristlets bring out their dignity and superior status as Gods. A quiver, laden with arrows, rests on the right shoulder of Śiva and a long bow is held in his left hand. Umā who stands behind him holds also a bow. Around her neck is a necklet containing the "tālī" or jewel indicative of married life. A white *tilaka* on her forehead, *patra-kuṇḍalas* in her ears and long *hāras* and breast-band (*kuca-bandha*) can be noticed. Behind her stands another woman, exactly like Umā in dress, decorations and pose. But her size, which is smaller, indicates that she is probably one of the many merry female goblins that according to the *Mahābhārata* followed Śiva disguised as huntresses.[2] In front of Śiva is a little figure with hair arranged in a top-knot (*keśa-bandha*) and right hand outstretched as in pointing. Perhaps it was meant to represent the boy Kumāra who is evidently accompanying his parents. Being *Senānīḥ* his function appears to have been to take charge of the *Gaṇas* and exhort them when the need arose as we saw above[3]. In front of Śiva stands Mūka as a boar, silent and inactive, facing Śiva who with the first two fingers of his right hand appears to be speaking or addressing it. The wild eyes, the side-tusks (daṁṣṭrā), and the deep black colour of the boar have received due emphasis at the hands of the painter. Why is the boar standing so silently before Śiva (as *Kirāta*) and what is Śiva indicating by the two fingers of his right hand?

According to a less known version of the story not recorded in the *Mahā-Bhārata* or by Bhāravi but noticed in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*[4] and by Monier

[1] See below, page 104.

[2] *Mahābhārata, Vana parva*, XXXIX, vv. 1-6.

[3] Bhāravi, 15th *sarga*, vv. 19 and 29.

[4] Part IV, p. 196.

Williams[1] we learn that when Śiva assumed the form of a *Kirāta*, one of his accompanying attendants was transformed into a wild boar, and Arjuna preparing to shoot it was interrupted by the *Kirāta* who forbade him to strike his game[2]. The attitude of the boar and the *Kirāta* in the painting will then mean that Śiva is instructing his attendant about the part assigned to him in the drama of "Arjuna's penance". Below the boar a part of the hill (Indrakīla) is shown, while above the boar are three figures hovering in the sky. One of them wears a girdle of leaves and holds a stick in his right hand. He may be one of the *gaṇas* transformed into a *Kirāta* or in all probability a Gandharva with a churning-stick. Of the other two whose heads are wrapped in turbans as wandering minstrels in South India are wont to wear, the rear one (in black colour) holds a long stick in his left hand and points with his right hand at some thing ahead or above. The object and his hand pose are explained by the other figure in front of him whose legs suggest that he is hovering or flying, whose left hand holds a lute (*vīṇā*) and whose right hand suggests that he is singing. These two or three figures if we include the rearmost figure with the girdle of leaves, perhaps represent Gandharvas who are the divine minstrels. Gandharvas are described as celestial musicians who sing and dance and hold a lute or a churning stick or other musical instruments[3]. The stick that two of them hold may be a churning stick. As remarked at the beginning, this panel is excellent with all its colours fairly preserved.

The story is continued in Bay No. 5. The sages whom we saw fleeing before the advancing boar are shown again in panel *a* of Bay No. 5 where approaching Arjuna in penance they warned him of the approaching Mūkāsura. Arjuna let fly a shaft from his bow at the advancing boar, and so did the disguised hunter (Śiva) and the boar fell lifeless. In panel *b*, the *Kirāta* and Arjuna with drawn bows, are ranged on either side of the boar, into whose body an arrow has been stuck. The occasion portrayed obviously relates to the personal combat between the two archers

[1] *Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 103.

[2] P. V. Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, p. 174.

[3] For details regarding *Gandharvas* see T. N. Ramachandran, *Archaeological discoveries along Maināmati and Lālmai Ranges*, p. 222, foot-notes 1, 2, 3. [*B. C. Law Volume*, Part II].

that followed their altercation over their individual rights to shoot at the boar. Then the two are engaged in the first phase of the combat, *viz.*, fighting with bows and arrows. Panel *d* in Bay No. 5 shows the two in hand-to-hand-fight. They fought with swords when Arjuna had spent all his arrows and was deprived of his bow. Soon Arjuna lost his sword too and a hand-to-hand wrestling followed. Panel *e* shows the two wrestling, Śiva causing Arjuna to fall and rolling over him, while Umā stoops down to observe if Arjuna's breath is out. She was noticed in a similar pose while examining the carvings on the *Mukhamaṇḍapa* (see above, page 49). The fifth and concluding panel of Bay No. 5 shows Arjuna prostrating before and praising Śiva and Umā, who mounted on the bull Nandī (*vṛiṣabhārūḍha*) appeared before him and blessed him. We cannot make out such details as gift of *Pāśupatāstra, etc.*, that may be expected. One cannot help remarking that the Lepākṣi painter generally hurries or epitomises his themes when their end is drawing near.

Pushpagiri

Pushpagiri or "the hill of flowers", on River Peṇṇār is ten miles north-west of Cuddapah (Andhra State) in Southern Rly and is sacred to Viṣṇu and Śiva. There are eight temples here, of which a temple of Śiva and another of Keśava Svāmī both enclosed in one court, are popularly called Pushpagiri temple[1]. Tradition assigns these temples to a Coḷa king who built them to avert the evil effects of a curse on him. The Keśava, or Cenna Keśava temple as it is popularly called, has on its *gopuram* many carvings. One of them representing the famous scene in which Kṛṣṇa as *Pārthasārathi* teaching the *Gītā* to Arjuna[2], and the other representing the gift of the *Pāśupatāstra* (arrow) to Arjuna by Śiva[3], are interesting.

In the latter carving Arjuna with his *gāṇḍīva* stands on a pedestal on the extreme left end. His right hand is outstretched to receive an arrow

[1] Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, fig. 180.

[2] *Ibid.*, fig. 182; H. Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images*, fig. 31.

[3] Gopinath Rao, pl. LII, fig. 2; Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, fig. 181; H. Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, fig. 91.

(the *pāśupatāstra*) which Śiva holds in his lower right hand and offers him. Śiva is here four-handed, with axe and trident in his upper hands, arrow in his lower right and lower left resting on his waist (*kaṭyavalaṁbita*). Behind Śiva or to speak correctly to Śiva's left stands Gaurī. Her right hand holds a lotus-bud and her left hangs down like the tail of a cow (*govāla*). The *Kirātārjunamūrti* form represented at Pushpagiri is after the description of the God found in *Śilpa-śāstras*[1]. Between Arjuna and Śiva is shown in miniature (as though of the background) the figure of a sage. The sage may either be Indra in the disguise of a sage, who tested his son and advised him to worship Śiva (Pinākī), or he may be Vyāsa (Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana) who appears first in the drama of Arjuna's penance, even before Indra's advent, and sends Arjuna to Indrakīla hill on his mission of penance[2]. Both Arjuna and Umā stand on one level, which is slightly higher than that of Śiva and the sage. Gopinatha Rao appropriately describes the carving as *Pāśupatāstradāna-mūrti*. He says, however, that it hails from Śrīśailam. Śrīśailam is a mistake for Pushpagiri. Decorative features and workmanship recall the Vijayanagara style of the 16th century A.D. to which the carving may reasonably be assigned.

Mahābalipuram

Mahābalipuram, a seacoast village, 40 miles south of Madras, in the Chingleput District of the Madras State, is popularly known as the *Seven Pagodas*. Its correct name is Māmallapuram, so named after the Pallava king Narasiṁhavarman I (640-674 A.D.) who bore the surname Māmalla or Mahāmalla. It owes the name "Seven Pagodas" to English mariners to whom the temples and monuments were visible while sailing along the

[1] Śrī *Tatvanidhi*:

Catur=bhujaṁ trinetraṁ ca jaṭāmakuṭasaṁyutam |
Sarvābharaṇasaṁyuktaṁ divyāmbarasamāvṛtam ||
Dhanur=bāṇayutaṁ raktaṁ kṛṣṇaparaśusaṁyutam |
Upavītasamāyuktaṁ samabhaṅgatanuṁ kuru |
Vāme Gaurīsamāyuktaṁ dakṣiṇe tv=Arjunaṁ sthitam ||

[2] See above, p. 4; Krishna Sastri takes the sage in miniature for one of the attendants of Śiva. See his *South Indian Images of Gods and goddesses*, p. 143.

coast. Other instances known are the Sūrya temple at Konārka and the Jagannātha temple at Pūrī on the Orissan coast, the former called "Black Pagoda" and the latter "White Pagoda". The place was a naval base when the Pallava kings were ruling, with Kāñcī as their capital. Mahābalipuram is famous for its cut-in cave temples, monolithic, free-standing cut-out temples known as *Rathas* and rock-sculptures. The rock-sculptures are highly interesting. Some of them are large bas-reliefs in the open air with scenes carved on the natural face of a cliff or huge rock. Both Longhurst and Hultzsch wrote that being "different from anything of the kind found elsewhere in India"[1] and also due to "the fact that a northern alphabet was employed along with a southern one" in the few Pallava inscriptions discovered at Mahabalipuram, these rock sculptures were perhaps the works of artisans and architects recruited from the north of India[2]. A few of these rock sculptures are unfinished. This in itself is a 'blessing in disguise' for they explain the method of the early sculptors in excavating and carving them out. At first the face of the rock was given a vertical scarp or slope. Then the area required for the façade was deeply marked out by lines both horizontal and vertical, which by virtue of intersection at regular intervals formed a number of cubes (maximum about 2′ square) arranged in rows. Sculptors will readily appreciate this method as it not only made the rock easier to work, but the lines also served as a rough guide to the proposed dimensions. The details of carving were then indicated in outline. The work of chipping, chiselling and cutting the rock followed till sufficient rock had been removed and scrapped to fix the outlined carving into a three-dimensional back-ground, in other words to bring the outline into relief.

One such rock-sculpture represents "Arjuna's penance" (Pl. V). The carving is "unique and unlike any other ancient monument in India"[3] and a masterpiece rich in iconographic content. It has been described in detail in various works dealing with the place, the majority describing it as "Arjuna's

[1] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, p. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

penance"[1] while Prof. J. Ph. Vögel says that "there is nothing to indicate that the figure in penance in the carving represents Arjuna[2]. French writers like Rodin, Goloubew and Jouveau Dubreuil and the great art-critic Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy are of opinion that the subject relates to "Bhagīratha's penance" and that the whole represents the "Descent of the River Gaṅgā (*Gaṅgāvataraṇa*)"[3] Fergusson, the author of the *Tree and Serpent Worship*, and one of the very early writers on this subject was misled, by the loose figures of a Nāga and Nāginī fixed in the centre of a cleft or fissure, into believing that the whole scene related to Nāga worship[4], which is impossible as the Nāga figures themselves have their hands folded in adoration (*añjali*) as though they are out to worship, than be worshipped. Mr. M. S. Venkataswami of Madras attempted to show that the scene represented a Jaina legend[5] recorded in the life of the second Tīrthaṅkara, Ajitanātha. The details of the legend are briefly as follows:—[6]

"Sagara, the brother of Ajitanātha, went to the wilderness and performed penance. Nāṭyāmalaka, a divinity, appeared before him and granted his prayer which was for the possession of the nine riches. These riches were guarded by nine demigods and their retinue of demons. After their wanderings in the country, Sagara's sons reached the Kailāsa moun-

[1] *Descriptive and Historical Papers relating to the 7 Pagodas on the Coromandel coast, by* W. Chambers, J. Goldingham, B. G. Babington, G. W. Mahon, J. Broaddock, W. Taylor, W. Elliot, C. Gubbins—Edited by M. W. Carr, Madras, 1869; P. V. Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines* (1922), p. 161, 173-5; Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, vol. I. pp. 327-342; Fergusson and Burgess, *The Cave temples of India*, pp. 105-61; V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 1930, plate 88; *A. S. I., A. R.* 1910-11, pp. 59-60—J. Ph. Vogel, *Iconographical Notes on the Seven Pagodas;* A. Rea, *Pallava Architecture;* E. Hultzch, *The Pallava inscriptions of the Seven Pagodas* (*E.I.*, Vol X, pp. 1 ff); A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, part II, pp. 40—44; T. N. Ramachandran, *The Royal Artist Mahendravarman I*, 1931, (J.O.R., Vol. VII), pp. 219-246, and 303-330; S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar in *Indian Antiquary*, 1917, December, 1928 and January-February 1929.

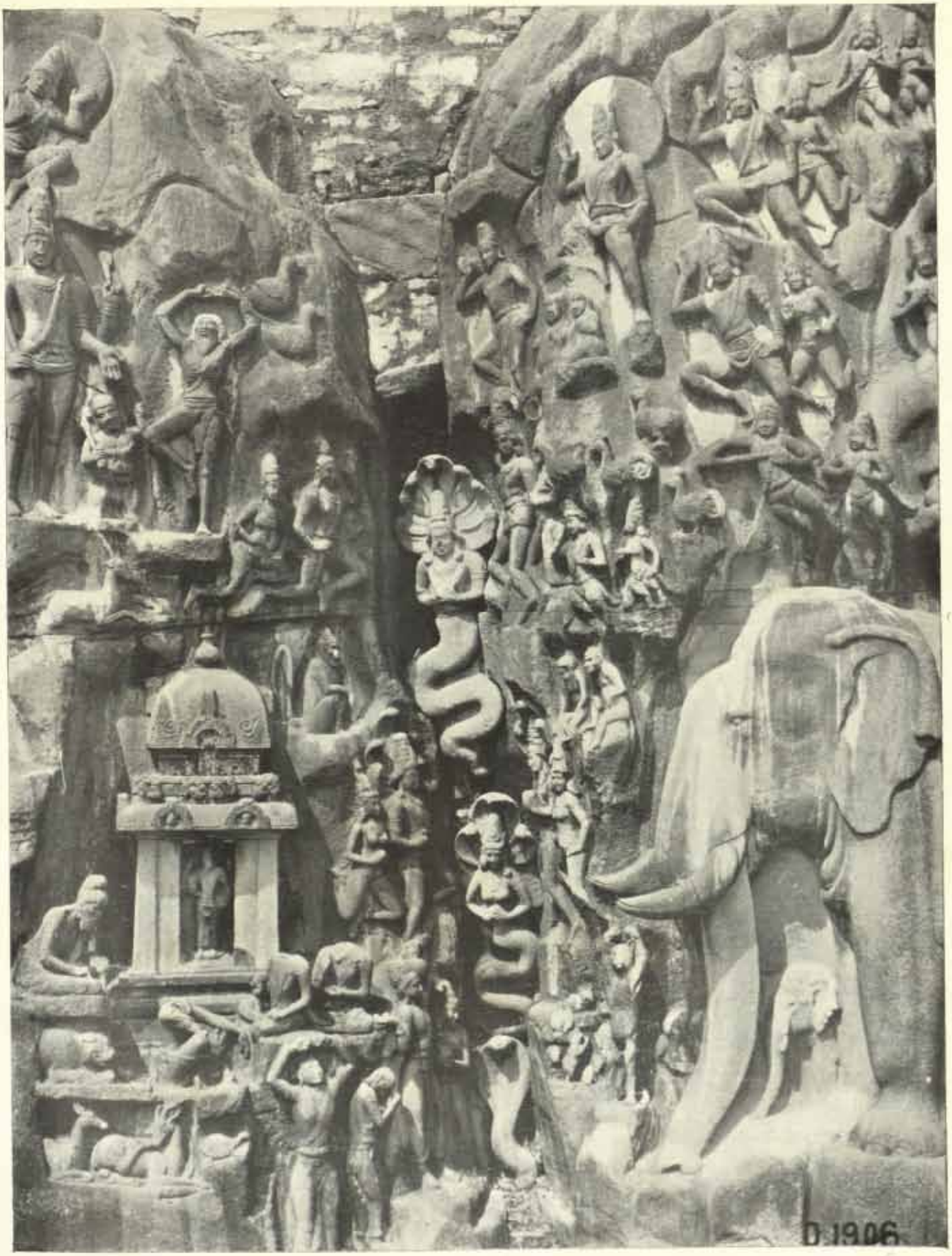
[2] *A.S.I., A.R.*, 1910-11, p. 59.

[3] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 103, figs. 198, 206 and 207; Rodin, A. Coomaraswamy and Goloubew, V, *Sculptures Civaites* (*Ars. Asiatica*, III, Paris, 1921); G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, *La descente de la Ganga a Mahabalipuram*, (ETUDES D'ORIENTALISME, a la memoire de Raymonde Linossier), pp. 293-297.

[4] *Cave temples*, fig. 41 and *History of Indian Architecture*, vol. I, fig. 197.

[5] See *The Archaeological Society of South India*, Madras, Proceedings No. 53, 1947.

[6] The story is narrated in the *Śrīpurāṇa*—[Jīva-saṁbodhana] and *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*.


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tain and saw the temple of Ṛṣabhadeva there. In order to protect the temple, they began to dig a moat. Daṇḍaratna, a divine weapon, that they used for the excavation, was so effective that it touched the nether world and annoyed the Nāga inhabitants. After the excavation, the flow of the Ganges was diverted to the moat and it resulted in the inundation of the Nāga world. The king of the Nāgas (Jvalanaprabha) became angry and rushed up to the spot and the fire of his wrath consumed the sons of Sagara"

Mr. Venkataswami interprets the relief in the light of this legend as follows:—

"In the upper half of the right side, the so-called Arjuna is Sagara standing before the divinity Nāṭyāmalaka. The eight pairs of male and female figures are the demigods guarding eight out of the nine riches. Eight goblins are also seen. The ninth of the riches is depicted on the left side. The figures of a deer and lion indicate the forest scene. On the left side the last of the nine riches, *Sarvaratnam* and the fourteen worldly possessions known as *Jīvaratnam* and *Ajīvaratnam* are indicated as pairs of divine beings. The temple in the lower half is that of Ṛṣabhadeva of Kailāsa. The story says that Bharata constructed the temple of Ṛṣabhadeva at Kailāsa and also set up before the shrine his own image. The seated Yogī in front of the temple is Bharata. Ṛṣabhadeva is sculptured here in the form of Viṣṇu who, according to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, was born as Ṛṣabhadeva. The cleft represents the moat dug by the sons of Sagara. The semi-human Nāga and Nāginī hastily coming from below are the Nāga king Jvalanaprabha and his consort. The three headless forms are perhaps designed deliberately to show that the sons of Sagara perished at the sight of the Nāga king. The pot carried by a man in the lower half possibly indicates the collection and disposal of the bones of Sagara's sons. Another man is holding what is called a cornucopia. But it is the divine weapon Daṇḍaratna with which the moat was dug. The Jain text compares the anger of the Nāga king to that of a mad elephant and the sculptor appears to have taken the hint from this passage to chisel the noble group of elephants.

Literary evidence has led historians to think that Pallava Mahendra-Varman I was originally a Jain and that he was later converted to Śaivism

by Saint Appar. The sculpture perhaps belongs to the heyday of South Indian Jainism under Mahendra Varman."

Mr. Venkataswami's interpretation in the light of the Jaina legend detailed above is itself based on Venkayya's theory that the Tamil Saint Appar was first persecuted and subsequently patronised by a Pallava King and this Pallava was assumed to be Mahendravarman I', who, according to Venkayya, persecuted Jainas "with the proverbial zeal of the new convert". It is difficult to admit this view as proved by the writer elsewhere.[2] Mahendravarman I, was an artist who shared not a bit of the "persecuting zeal of the new convert." He was no convert and if he was indeed one, he was a convert to the Muses, poetry, literature, in short a convert to Art. The Jaina legend cited by Mr. Venkataswami cannot apply to the relief for the following reasons:—

1. The figure taken to represent Nāṭyāmalaka with Candra above and *gaṇas* around answers strictly the iconographical conception of Śiva.

2. The figure doing penance strictly answers the description of Arjuna given in the concerned *parvas* of the *Mahābhārata* and *sargas* in Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya.*

3. The *deer and lion* indicate that it is a *tapovana,* the *Badarī-vana* for the reasons given below (pages 69-71).

4. Vidyādhara and Vyantara couples hovering in the sky are mistaken for the nine riches or *nidhis.* We have a very different description of the *nidhis* according to Jaina texts[3].

5. Viṣṇu within a shrine is mistaken for the first Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Ṛṣabhadeva, whose iconography is different[4].

[1] *A.S.I., A.R.,* 1906-07, p. 235; *S.I.I.,* Vol. I, p. 29, verse 2.

[2] T. N. Ramachandran, *The Royal Artist, Mahendravarman* I, pp. 326-330.

[3] See *Trilokasāra, Naratiryak-lokādhikāra, gāthās* 821, 822; T. N. Ramachandran, *Tiruparuttikunram and its temples,* p. 130.

[4] See T. N. Ramachandran, *Tiruparuttikunram and its temples,* pp. 192-3.

6. The emaciated figure beside the Viṣṇu shrine is mistaken for Bharata.

7. The Nāgas in the cleft are more than two to admit the view that the Nāga Jvalanaprabha and his wife were alone meant.

8. The headless figures are mistaken to stand for the idea that Sagara's sons perished at the sight of the Nāga King. The Nāga's fury or wrath cannot be supposed to have decapitated the figures. The fire of wrath consumes, it never beheads its victims. The circumstance of the loose Nāga figures in the cleft having fallen sometime in the past from their original places and knocked down the heads of the figures in question and the tusks of the elephant on the opposite side of the cleft, which Mr. Longhurst has referred to in his memoir on *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, p. 41, is forgotten by Mr. Venkataswami in his anxiety to apply the Jaina legend to the relief and make the Nāga's fury have an abnormal effect, viz., decapitation.

9. The two persons on the water-edge, one fetching water in a pitcher and the other wringing a cloth after washing and squeezing the water out of it constitute a common scene near any water side or river bank. These two men have been mistaken to stand for one disposing of the bones of Sagara's sons and the other for holding a divine weapon called Daṇḍaratna with which Sagara's sons dug a moat. It is impossible to make out the second figure as digging from what is held by the person referred to.

10. And lastly Mr. Venkataswami's explanation that the circumstance of the Jaina text comparing the anger of the Nāga King to that of a mad elephant should have supplied the sculptor the inspiration to carve a number of elephants on the opposite bank of the river, takes one's breath away.

Yet another identification worth considering here, before we pursue

the *Kirātārjunīya* possibility, is that of Sri R. Srinivasa Raghava Ayyangar[1], according to whom Śiva is standing beside a worshipper of Śiva who is practising *haṭha-yoga*, and holding a long staff with a lotus-like object at its end, a sort of *gadā*, is making an asseveration that between himself and Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu is the supreme deity, and that he is in fact indicating the figure of Viṣṇu below who has consequently been shown in a shrine. According to him what most people call Arjuna(?) is just a worshipper of Śiva, a representative of Śaiva, Pāśupata, Kāpālika and Kālāmukha *tantras* which were "all a deceit," that all these *tantras* were "outside the time-honoured path of the Veda and taught by Śiva, who axe (or red hot iron) in hand could proclaim to all the world that Viṣṇu is the supreme deity"[2] and that "Śiva taught these in order to give effect to the curse of sage Gautama that those who set up to examine eternal truths may suffer in false belief". The river, according to him, divides the scene into two parts, an upper devoted to Śiva's asseveration and declaration and a lower to depict Viṣṇu and his worshippers. Other figures constitute the multitude of forms of life, from birds to Devas, from the lowest to the highest, assembled and eager to hear the words of Śiva, their eagerness being manifest in their raising their hands to their ears and straining to hear the important declaration. Mr. Srinivasa Raghava Ayyangar's theory holds good in so far as the identification of Śiva and Viṣṇu is concerned with the multitude of life, from the lowest to the highest in attendance. His theory is based on a text called *Paramatabhaṅga*, a work of Nigamānta Mahā Deśika who lived about 1268-1369 A. D.[3] Our relief is earlier than the text by seven centuries. Mr. Ayyangar cites *Pādmottara Purāṇa* as the basis of Deśika's verse. But all that we find in the *Pādmottara Purāṇa* is that Śiva narrates to Pārvatī that Viṣṇu is a *Paradevatā* or Supreme Being[4]. The graphic asseveration that Śiva is said to have made with a red-hot iron or axe in his hand to declare to the world that Viṣṇu alone was the Supreme Deity, that Śaiva tantras (*Pāśupata* etc.) were all "a deceit" is found only in *Paramatabhaṅga*, clearly a work of the 14th century A.D.

[1] *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX, 1931, pp. 101-104.

[2] *Ind. Ant.* Vol. LX, p. 102.

[3] *Paramata-Bhaṅga*, verse 41.

[4] *Pādmottara Purāṇa*, Ch. 72, vv. 97 and 123.

and as such cannot apply here. Also Śiva in the relief holds a trident instead of the red-hot iron or axe. The penitent "worshipper of Śiva" suggests by the presence of Śiva in front of him a devotee (such as Arjuna) deserving to reap from his god the result of his devotion and penance to him. He cannot be taken to be a solitary representative of the deceitful groups of followers of *Śaiva tantras* (Kālāmukha, Kāpālika, Pāśupata, etc.). The raised hand in the case of the flying figures of celestials and others would be the normal pose in the case of figures flying or moving and does in no way support Mr. Ayyangar's contention that the pose indicates the eagerness of the figures and the consequent straining of their ears to listen to Śiva's asseveration. The pose may at best indicate *vismaya* or wonder or suggest that the figures are singing (*stava*), perhaps the praises of the God.

It will be our endeavour to show that the scene portrayed is neither "Nāga worship", nor the Jaina version relating to the story of Sagara's sons nor a declaration of Viṣṇu's supremacy by Śiva (Viṣṇu's *paradevatā-pāramārthya*) nor the descent of Gaṅgā as a result of Bhagīratha's penance, but the "penance of Arjuna" on the top of the Indra-kīla hill at the foot of which Gaṅgā flowed[1] and where Śiva visits Arjuna and awards him *Pāśupat-āstra*. The Jaina version and the theory of Viṣṇu's *paradevatā-pāramārthya* have already been examined and disproved. As the details of the carving are after Bhāravi's version of the penance of Arjuna (*Kirāt-ārjunīya*), as we shall see presently, the carving acquires singular import-ance, as a master-work of art following a master classical poem of the 6th-7th century A.D.

Ananda Coomaraswamy, the greatest exponent of the *Gaṅgā-vataraṇa* theory describes the sculpture as follows:—

"Here a great rock wall with a median fissure, has been covered on both sides with sculptured figures of deities, human beings, Nāgas, and animals of all kinds, approaching or facing towards the fissure and for the most part with hands joined in adoration. Immediately to the left of the fissure is a small sculptured shrine (the Dravidian temple in its simplest form) con-

[1] Bhāravi, *Kirātārjunīya*, 10th *sarga*, v. 12, 11th *sarga*, v. 86, 12th *sarga*, v. 54.

taining the standing figure of a four-armed deity, probably Śiva; before this temple is bowed an emaciated *yogī*, who is also represented above with raised arms, (*ūrdhva-bāhu*), practising *tapas*. The fissure is occupied by the Nāgas who are beings associated with the waters; above, on either side are flying figures of gods, and below are the wild creatures of the forests, amongst which the monumental elephants may be specially mentioned. If any further evidence were needed to support the suggestion of Goloubew that the whole scene represents the Descent of the Ganges (*Gaṅgā-vataraṇa*) it could be found in the figure of the ascetic cat standing erect as a *tapasvī* in *ūrdhva-bāhu* pose, while trustful mice play at his feet; stories of false ascetic cats deluding innocent mice on the banks of the Ganges are to be found in the *Hitopadeśa, Mahābhārata* and elsewhere."[1]

Mr. Coomaraswamy's view is quoted above with a view to show how his arguments and points in favour of "Bhagīratha" and Descent of Gaṅgā are equally, nay, even better, applicable to Arjuna.

This bas-relief, 90′×30′ according to Prof. Vögel[2] but nearly 100′ in length and 50′ in height according to other writers[3], reveals a method of carving discussed above (page 59) and has for reasons unknown one fourth of its lower left end unfinished. The regions portrayed are terrestrial, nether, aerial, stellar and celestial. The terrestrial regions comprise a wooded hill with caves and dens for wild animals mostly lions, with roaming deer, chirruping birds, monkeys, rabbits, squirrels, turtles and hunters, wooded lowlands inhabited by gazelles, antelopes, rabbits, lizards, turtles, birds, peahen, peacocks, ducks and monkeys, a forest river flowing at the foot of the hill and winding its way through the low lands creating bogs and marshes (*kaccha*) appropriately inhabited by various animals, mice, cat and elephants. The river itself is located in a large vertical fissure which separates the two halves of the rock leaving the major or important scenes on the left half. To enforce the idea that it is a river the sculptor has taken pains to fill it with water-spirits such as Nāga and Nāginī figures and to

[1] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 103; *Mahābhārata, Udyoga, Ulūkadautya, adhyāya* 160.

[2] A.S.I., A.R., 1910-11, p. 59.

[3] Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, p. 161.

crowd its flanks with couples of Nāgas and Nāginīs. Lest we should forget that Nāgas are of the serpent or reptile class the sculptor has not forgotten to show at the bottom of the fissure a Nāga in its reptile form emerging as from the nether region (Pl. V). The Nāga couples (of male and female) on either flank or bank of the river suggest the nether region. Swans (two of them), peacocks (two) on the right side of the river and geese on the left high up, baboons with long tail similarly squatting in the same alignment on the opposite side, one of them grinning, and an elephant herd under the leadership of a huge tusker moving towards the river on the right bottom represent the associative scenes on a river side. Two elephants of proper proportions, the largest measuring 17′ by 14′ and the smaller 11′ by 10′ with a number of cubs below them and behind following them help to bring out the artist's idea that the herd is passing through a bog (*kaccha*) or bank to reach the river. That elephants are fond of sporting in water is a well-known theme of poets and artists[1]. In front of the big elephant and at the water-edge stands a 'penitent' cat in *ūrdhva-bāhu* pose like Arjuna, while trustful mice play at his feet (Pl. V).

On the bank of the river, opposite to the elephants is another scene that may be expected on a river side. Four men, whose sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) indicates their status as "twice-born" (*dvijas*) are engaged in their daily ablutions on the river bank. Two of them are engaged in *Sandhyā-vandana* after having bathed in the river, one lowering his head and folding his hands in *añjali* and the other doing *Sūryopasthāna* by arranging his hands web-like so that he could behold Sūrya through a slot formed out of the two hands. This will be familiar to Brāhmaṇas who have to do so in their *Mādhyānhika*. They are forbidden to eat without beholding the Sun (Āditya) thus every day. The third and the fourth men in this group appear to be important persons judging from their *jaṭāmakuṭas* which are similar to the *jaṭāmakuṭas* that Nara and Nārāyaṇa in the

[1] T. N. Ramachandran & Chhotelal Jain, *Khaṇḍagiri-Udayagiri caves* p. 10—

Cf. Scene of elephants sporting in river in Lower cave facade, Rāni Nūr cave of the 2nd century, B.C.

Deogarh relief are associated with[1]. One of them carries a water-pitcher (*ghaṭa*) on his left shoulder and with his right hand decorated with a wristlet (of beads) indicates *vismaya* or rapture as in *stava* or praise or prayer. Or is he suggesting to the party by the fingers pointing back that it is already late and that they must hurry up? His earlobes are distended and empty as in the Nara-Nārāyaṇa relief from Deogarh suggesting that once they wore *kuṇḍalas*. His right wrist with a bracelet (the left wrist being without it) suggests that he is perhaps in the midst of a *vrata*, and the bracelet is a *kaṅkaṇa*[2]. Is he carrying water in the pot resting on his left shoulder, for *abhiṣeka* of the deity installed in a shrine behind? If so, the *kaṅkaṇa* in his right wrist appropriately suggests that he is engaged in the *Pūjā* of that God (*ārādhanā*). His upper cloth (*uttarīya*) is arranged *yajñopavīta*-like on his powerful chest. His under-garment is arranged in *kaccha* with the ends secured on the waist like a bow-knot. Over this is placed a girdle (*mekhāla*) to hold the *kaccha* in position. One cannot help noticing that the sculptor has given more decoration to this man than to the other three of the group. The fourth man who stands on his left is shown as very near the river fringe, possibly with his legs partly in the river itself. He has just finished his bath and before stepping up from the water is actually engaged in twisting his *uttarīya* or upper cloth which is wet and wringing all the dripping water out of it—a familiar experience of all river-bathers. In the light of this interpretation there is no basis or appropriateness for taking the object in his hands for a *cornucopia* as early writers have taken it to be[3]. A *jaṭāmakuṭa* similar to that of the person with the pot can be seen on his head. He wears an under-garment in *kaccha* fashion though the folds and ends are not clearly marked. His chest is bare, as the *uttarīya* that has to go on it *yajñopavīta*-wise is the one which he is wringing by both hands. The four men near the water side engaged in their respective ablutions represent the normal life in India on a water-side.

[1] See T. N. Ramachandran, *Fresh light on the Deogarh relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa*, plate I (*I.H.Q.*, Vol. XXVII, No. 3, pp. 191-6).

[2] The *Kaṅkaṇa* is tied to the right wrist of the performer at the commencement of a *vrata*, *Pūjā*, religious ceremony or marriage and released at its termination.

[3] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, part II, p. 43

Behind them is an elevated ground where a shrine with the figure of Viṣṇu installed in it and four ascetics in front arrests our attention both by the quality of the carving, and by the subject matter chosen. Though a shrine of Viṣṇu with ascetics engaged in different forms of *tapas* in front of it is as much a normal feature on a river bank in South India as persons engaged in ablutions or snakes swimming in the river or even elephants advancing to the water-side for a plunge, the juxtaposition of the ascetics and the shrine with the image of Viṣṇu in it in a vertical line with the scene above, *viz.*, Arjuna standing in penance (Pl. V), is of great importance in our interpretation of the entire rock sculpture with the aid of Bhāravi's descriptive verses of the Indrakīla hill. The 12th *sarga* of Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīyam* contains the explanation. While Arjuna was engaged in his penance—standing on one leg with his arms raised over his head, subjecting himself to austerities, becoming emaciated thereby while his beard grew and his hair got shaggy and locked—the doubting sages of the forest went to Śiva for protection from the heat of Arjuna's *tapas* and for an explanation why a mortal man (*prākrita*) was doing penance. Śiva gave them the explanation that Arjuna was no other than Nara come to the mortal world and that Nara and Nārāyaṇa of *Badarī-vana* were now born in the world, at Brahmā's request, as Arjuna and Acyuta (Kṛṣṇa) to annihilate *asuras*.[1] The verses that contain the explanation run thus:—

Badarī=tapovananivāsaniratam=avagāta mānyathā।

Dhātur=udayanidhane jagatāṁ Naramaṁśam=Ādipuruṣasya
gāṁ gatam ॥

Translation:

"Know ye! This person (Arjuna) is none else than the *aṁśa* (called Nara) come to the mortal world of the Ādipuruṣa, God Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa), whose permanent abode is *Badarītapovana* and whose functions are creation and destruction."

[1] *Bhāravi*, 12th *sarga*, vv. 33, 35; Mahābhārata, *Vana*, XL, vv. 1-7.

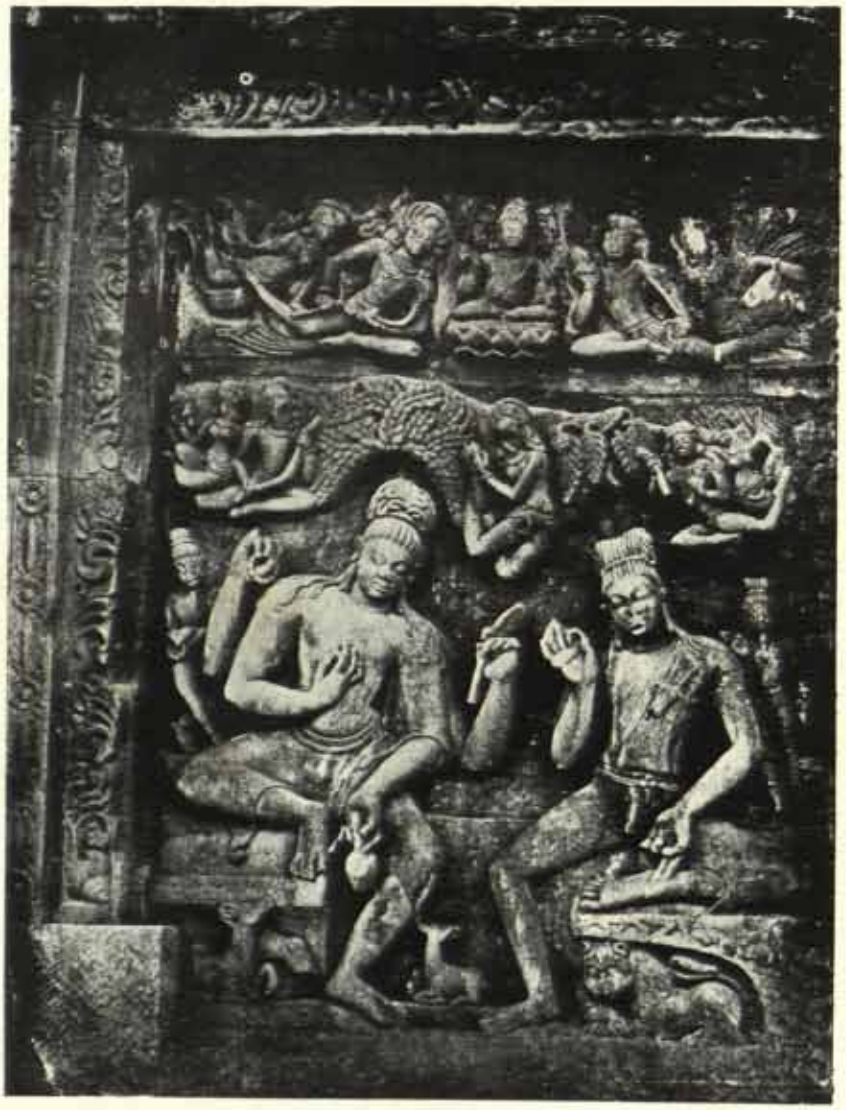
Ayaṁ = Acyutaś = ca vacanena sarasiruhajanmanaḥ prajāḥ |
Pātum = asuranidhanena vibhū bhuvam = abhyupetya
manujeṣu tiṣṭhataḥ ||

"This person [*viz.*, Arjuna who is none else than Nara] and (this) Acyuta, [*i.e.*, Kṛṣṇa] these two Supreme Beings (*vibhū*) are living now in the mortal world among mortals (*manujas*), at the request of Brahmā, for protecting people from *asuras*".

Mallinātha, the commentator of Bhāravi's poem, while offering his comments on these two verses, gives due emphasis to the conclusions of the two verses, *viz.*, that Arjuna should not be understood to be an ordinary man (*manuṣyamātraṁ mā jānīta*) and that Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa were in reality Nara and Nārāyaṇa (*vastutastu sākṣāt Nara-Nārāyaṇā vetau Kṛṣṇārjunau*).

This psychological moment has no doubt had its appeal to the sculptor who depicts the mortal Arjuna above as in penance and his then-associate in the mortal world Kṛṣṇa below, both in a line (vertical), while Śiva who announces this secret stands beside Arjuna (Pl. V) and with his lower left hand of seeming benevolence (*varada*) points at the scene below, obviously an *inset*-event meant for recapitulation or remembrance (or preview or retrospect as it is called in dramas).[1] The *inset*-effect or the attempt to recall that Arjuna who was standing before them penitent was no less a person than the illustrious Nara of the Nara-Nārāyaṇa existence, is ably achieved by demarcating the rock below Arjuna's feet in a zigzag line. That it is Kṛṣṇa (the Acyuta of Bhāravi) as Viṣṇu in the shrine below is obvious. Kṛṣṇa being enshrined in a shrine is appropriate as his Viṣṇu-*avatāra* was a well-known fact to all mortals of the *Dvāpara-yuga* to which Arjuna belonged. Even the Pāṇḍavas including Arjuna and their mother Kuntī recognised him as God Viṣṇu and offered him prayers. But the aim of the sculptor is to show that while Acyuta's (Kṛṣṇa's) greatness was known, Arjuna's greatness was not likewise known to the world and nobody even suspected that he was Nara. One may wonder if Arjuna was aware of his own Nara-aspect. The image of Kṛṣṇa in the shrine is as

[1] *Mahābhārata, Vana, Kairāta Parva*, XL, vv. 1-7.



Viṣṇu should be (Pl. V). It is not Śiva as Coomaraswamy assumes.[1] The image is standing in *samabhaṅga*. The upper right hand holds a *cakra* as in *prayoga*, the upper left a conch. The lower right hand indicates protection (*abhaya*) and the lower left rests on the thigh (*kaṭyavalaṁbita*). A *kirīṭamakuṭa* on head, a *yajñopavīta* of a single thick chord spread over the lower right hand and undergarment (*pītāmbara*) hanging down to the ankles help to rank it with the best Viṣṇu images of Pallava times (7th century A.D.).[2]

The representation of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa in a vertical line is not accidental, but intentional. The sculptor who worked here appears to have been aware of the Nara-Nārāyaṇa aspect of the two and of its representation in contemporaneous or early sculpture. In particular he was perhaps aware of the famous Gupta relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa from Deogarh where the two brothers are represented in a horizontal line (Pl. VI). Both are seated on pedestals at Deograh as according to the *Mahābhārata* they did penance seated on *pīṭhas*.[3] As in Deogarh, Kṛṣṇa here (who is *Nārāyaṇa*) is four-handed while Arjuna (Nara of Deogarh) is two handed. At Deogarh both Nara and Nārāyaṇa are seated, but Kṛṣṇa is standing here as though in sympathy with his associate Arjuna (Nara) who is standing above and doing penance. A line drawn vertically in the sculpture through Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa will cut through their centre (Pl. V) and this, more than any texts or explanatory verses, suggests the relationship between the two.

The Mahābalipuram relief belongs to the Pallava period and the Deogarh relief to the Gupta period. The Gupta and Pallava periods comprise a *golden age* of Indian art when noble themes and great poems were requisitioned by great artists into their service. The *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi here and the "Nara-Nārāyaṇa penance" of the *Devī-Bhāgavata* at Deogarh are two of the many examples known to history. A

[1] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* p. 108.

[2] Cf. Viṣṇu in Trimūrti Cave—Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, part II, plate IX.

[3] *Śānti*, 344, 44; *Vana*, 47, 13; 90, 27.

brief account of the Deogarh relief in the light of the *Devī-Bhāgavata is* necessary for a better understanding of the Nara-Nārāyaṇa=Arjuna-Kṛṣṇa equation of the Mahābalipuram relief:—

"According to the relevant verses from the *Viṣṇudharmottara* "Nara" should have two hands and "Nārāyaṇa" four. A *badari* tree (the jujube) full of fruits and bloom should be shown between them. On the ground under the *badarī* tree, they (Nara and Nārāyaṇa) should be shown on a chariot of 8 wheels, each holding a rosary, wearing antelope-hide (*kṛṣṇājina*), possessing self-restraint (*dama*), and with their matted locks of hair secured in a top-knot on the head."

The story of Nara and Nārāyaṇa's penance on the Himālaya is graphically described in the *Mahābhārata*[1] and in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.[2] The description of *Badarī-vana*, of the two brothers Nara and Nārāyaṇa, and of the forest scene including deer, lions, etc., as found in the Deogarh relief is after the *Mahābhārata* version. Even the two separate *pīṭhas* of Nara and Nārāyaṇa are referred to in the *Māhabhārata*[3] and the flanking ascetics are also not omitted.[4]

But there are more details in the relief which have to be explained. Besides there is a reference in the *Viṣṇudharmottara* verse to a Hari and a Kṛṣṇa in addition to a Nara and a Nārāyaṇa. A satisfactory explanation of the Deograh relief is furnished by the *Devī-Bhāgavata, skandha* IV, *adhyāyas* 5-10. In particular *adhyāya* 6 in it is the most useful. The story as given there is summarised here—

Brahmā's *mānasika-putra* was Dharma, and Nara and Nārāyaṇa were Dharma's sons. Dharma married Dakṣa's daughters and through them had sons named Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Hari and Kṛṣṇa took to *yogābhyāsa* while Nara and Nārāyaṇa repaired to Gandhamādana in Prāleyādri and performed a severe penance on *Gaṅgā-tīra* in Badarik-

[1] *Śānti*, 344, 44; *Vana*, 47, 13; 90, 27.

[2] *Skandha* XI, *adhyāya* 4, vv. 6 ff.

[3] *Śānti* 344, 44—*Pīṭhayoś-copaviṣṭau tau.*

[4] *Vana*, 90, 27—. *namasyanti devam Nārāyaṇam prabhum* ||

āśrama. Their penance continued for 1,000 years and Śakra was perturbed. He created several obstacles to their penance such as sending wild animals to strike terror, and Kāma with Rati and Vasanta to enchant. Vasanta beautified nature and created trees such as *āmra, bakula, tilaka, kiṁśuka, kadamba* etc., in full bloom with a view to disturb their penance. Though their trance was broken they kept firm in their resolve of penance knowing that Śakra was at the bottom of the mischief. The wild animals sent to cause terror were foiled and subdued, so over-powering was the spiritual personality of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. When two attempts of his, one through Vasanta and another through wild animals failed, the third and the last attempt of Indra was to send his celestial nymphs (*apsarasas*) such as Tilottamā and Rambhā to tempt them. These nymphs danced and sang before the brothers, who were not however taken in. And Nārāyaṇa beat his thigh with his arm and created from out of his thigh a woman of superior beauty. Indra's nymphs felt small in her presence and were discomfited, so overpowering was her beauty. Because she came out of Nārāyaṇa's *ūru* (thigh) she was given the name Ūrvaśī.[1] Then Nara and Nārāyaṇa told them (the celestial nymphs) to lead Ūrvaśī to heaven (*svarga*) and to Maghavān (Indra) as gift from them to Indra and give her a due place of honour.

In the Deogarh sculpture Ūrvaśī is shown hovering in the sky (Pl. VI), between Nara and Nārāyaṇa and turning to her creator Nārāyaṇa paying him reverence at the time of departing. She turns to Nārāyaṇa in particular because he is her creator, the more important of the brothers, and also because he had decreed her future home as follows:—

Upāyanam=iyaṁ bālā gacchat-vadya manoharā|

Dattā=vābhyāṁ Maghavataḥ prīṇanāyo=rusaṁbhavā||

Being told that her future home will be with Indra for whose pleasure the brothers (Nārāyaṇa and Nara) had given her as a gift, she takes leave of Nārāyaṇa. The two separate pedestals of the brothers are the separate

[1] Urvasi's origin from Nārāyaṇa finds an early mention in the *Mahābhārata* (*Nārāyaṇiya*). Kālidāsa also refers to her advent from Nārāyaṇa's thigh. Cf. *Vikramorvaśiya* and *Mālavikāgnimitra*.

pīṭhas referred to in the *Mahābhārata*. The presence of other trees besides the *badarī* (the *kadamba*? above Nara) bespeaks *Vasanta-vilāsa* or nature at her best, which was one of Indra's attempts to disturb the penance of the brothers. The two *ṛṣis*, one behind Nārāyaṇa and the other behind Nara, represent the multitude of *ṛṣis* who according to the *Mahābhārata* came to *Badarī-vana* to worship the *prabhu*, Nārāyaṇa. The lion crouching and with *its legs crossed below Nara's pīṭha* is a representative of the wild animal class sent by Indra to terrify the brothers; its subdued or tamed condition underneath the *pīṭha* is shown in the sculpture. The three recumbent deer in front of Nārāyaṇa in an attitude of utter comfort and in the vicinity of a lion may be normal in a *tapovana* but in the present context they are also silent recorders of defeat of the ferocious animals and the consequent air of safety and composure that innocent creatures such as deer enjoyed in the *Badarī-vana*, thanks to Nārāyaṇa.

The details that occur in the Nara-Nārāyaṇa relief of Deogarh and at Mahābalipuram (Pl. V) and that are helpful for the identification of Nara with Arjuna and Nārāyaṇa with Acyuta (Viṣṇu) may now be examined. Nārāyaṇa of Deogarh has four arms and is seated below the *badarī* tree whose branches are bent and arranged to simulate a *śikhara* or dome shape. Acyuta or Kṛṣṇa (who is Viṣṇu) here is with four arms and within a shrine provided with a *śikhara* of the *Drāviḍa* type. Both Nara and Nārāyaṇa are in one line, though both are seated, and the line is horizontal. Here Arjuna (Nara's *aṁśa*) and Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu) are also in one line, but the line is vertical and the two are standing in that line. The Nara of Deogarh has his hair in a top-knot. So is Nara at Mahābalipuram. The emaciated *yogī* sitting on a *pīṭha* before the shrine with a forward bend, is no other than Nara. The sculptor has taken care to secure his hair in a top-knot as in Deogarh, distend his ear lobes and to seat him in the same level as Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu) standing within the shrine. He has also shown a crouching lion beneath his *pīṭha* as in Deogarh. The crouching lion stands in both places for the wild animals sent by Indra but subdued by the atmosphere of *Badarī-vana* and Nārāyaṇa's personality. Even the recumbent deer in an attitude of comfort and ease are not forgotten. We found them at Deograh in front of Nārāyaṇa; here they are below the crouching lion under Nara's seat and, in a sense, in front of Kṛṣṇa but not in his immediate front as in Deogarh, for the obvious reason that there are three seated ascetics (with

heads unfortunately mutilated by accident or vandals) occupying all the available space in Kṛṣṇa's immediate front. Several fantastic interpretations of these three figures (mutilated) have been given by some earlier writers. One is that, together with the *yogī* (whom I have identified as Nara) they form a group of four representing the four *Mānasika-putras* of Brahmā, *viz.*, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra who are permanent inhabitants of Vaikuṇṭha or Viṣṇu's abode. The four persons below, engaged in their ablutions near the water side (one in *suryopasthāna*, another in *vandana*, a third in fetching water and a fourth in wringing his wet *uttarīya*) are also supposed by the same writer to be Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra group now engaged in their daily routine of ablutions. The idea is that after this routine they enter Vaikuṇṭha and seating themselves in front of Viṣṇu sing the praises (*stava*) of Viṣṇu. Neither the standing group of four on the water-edge nor the seated group above can represent the holy four—Sanaka, Sanadana, Sanātana, and Sanatkumāra, who, as we learn from the *Bhāgavata*, being denied admission into Vaikuṇṭha by its guardians, Jaya and Vijaya, cursed the two to be born in three successive generations as demons [1. Hiraṇyakaśīpu and Hiraṇyākṣā, 2. Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa, 3. Śiśupāla and Dantavakra]. Their description in the sculpture does not agree with their iconography recorded in texts like the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*[1] for they are said to be in appearance like boys of five or six years of age and to roam naked. Their nudity and appearance like children led Jaya and Vijaya to refuse to admit them into the presence of Viṣṇu, with the result that the two were cursed to become demons. In the sculpture we note that they are grown-up men and dressed.

Another interpretation is that the bowing *Yogī* (whom we have taken to be Nara=Arjuna) is Droṇa Ācārya[2] and the three seated persons (headless) in front of him are his disciples in archery. But their seated pose in front

[1] 7th *Skandha*, *adyāya* I, vv. 35, 36—
Ekadā Brahmaṇaḥ putrāḥ Viṣṇnor-lokaṁ yadṛcchayā |
Sanandanādayo jagmuḥ caranto bhuvanatrayam | 35 |
Pañcaṣaḍ-dhāyanārbhābhāḥ pūrveṣāmapi pūrvajāḥ |
Digvāsasaḥ śiśūn matvā dvāssthau tān pratya-ṣedhatām | 36 |
Aśapan kupitā evaṁ yuvām vāsam na cārhathaḥ |

[2] Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, p. 178 f.n. 1.

of a Viṣṇu shrine and the way that one of the so-called disciples sits in front of the so-called Droṇa showing his back to his *Ācārya* (a mark of disrespect to a *Guru*) and with legs held by a *yoga-bandha* as in meditation goes against this identification.

There is nothing to be said in favour of yet another interpretation, which describes the scene in front of the Viṣṇu-shrine as "of King Bali holding his durbar attended by warriors, Rājas, and several wild animals", that the representation below the zig-zag line under Arjuna's feet is "*Pātālaloka* (the nether world) whither he was sent down by the Vāmana-Trivikrama *avatāra* (the dwarf incarnation of Viṣṇu) to rule over the place" and that "in the middle of the same rock is shown Vāsuki (Lord of serpents) in the aspect of a dragon under a canopy; the other figures are his daughter Ulūpi seated below, and another a penitent".[1]

Mr. Jagadisa Iyer was obviously lured by the modern name of the village Mahābalipuram into conjuring up the story of King Bali. If we accept this theory, then, who is King Bali in the sculpture, where are the kings and warriors that formed his Durbar? How can wild animals join a Durbar? The nether-world idea which is obviously suggested by the river with its water-spirits Nāga, Nāginī and snake, may well be taken to stand only for a river, its water, its inhabitants and its banks. The Nāga and Nāginī and the reptile may just be what they are, instead of being elevated to the exalted Vāsuki or Ulūpi. The reptile is just an ordinary cobra shown in its characteristic pose, and there is no sanction for the writer to take it to be a 'penitent' too. The inset-effect intended by the zig-zag line below Arjuna's feet has obviously led the writer to the misnomer of Pātāla, King Bali in durbar and Vāsuki and Ulūpi. Nāgas as water-spirits are shown in rivers and tanks as here and sometimes as rising up out of a bed of conventional lotuses and lotus leaves, the latter standing for water[2] region.

It is fairly reasonable to take the four men near the water edge as

[1] Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, pp. 162-8.

[2] Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, plate 21-a; L. Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, Vol. I; Plate 23.

persons normally engaged in their ablutions which is a familiar scene on any river bank in India, in the contiguity of a shrine. The emaciated *yogī* with forward bend seated on a *pīṭha* is Nara in his equation of Arjuna. The emaciated appearance is to compare him with the penitent Arjuna above and to convince the spectator that the two are one and the same person, *viz.*, Nara, the seated figure below representing his original Nara-stage in *Badarī-vana* environment, and the standing penitent figure above representing his subsequent stage as Arjuna in the Indrakīla environment. With unequalled skill and ingenuity the sculptor has associated both the scenes with one common element, *viz.*, a river, the perennial Gaṅgā which flowed through the ages. At the foot of the Indrakīla hill where Arjuna did penance, flowed River Gaṅgā.[1] Similarly the *Badarikāśrama*, where Nara and Nārāyaṇa performed penance long ago was located on *Gaṅgā-tīra* or bank of River Gaṅgā. A zig-zag cut in the rock below standing Arjuna carries the partition between the two scenes in such a way that all that we find on this side (right) of it belongs to the left scene as well and helps to understand the latter in its correct perspective. The three mutilated figures in front of Nara are either the normal worshippers in a *tapovana*, one engaged in *yogābhyāsa* with his leg secured by a *yoga-paṭṭa* and the other two in religious discourses and the like or representatives of the multitude of ascetics that according to the *Mahābhārata* came to visit Nārāyaṇa in *Badarī-vana*.[2] The Deogarh relief shows similarly two visiting ascetics, one behind Nārāyaṇa and the other behind Nara (Pl. VI).

On the river-bank opposite to the shrine we find the figure of the ascetic-cat standing on its hind legs, with its forepaws raised above its head in seeming imitation of the penitent Arjuna, while trustful mice play at its feet; some of them worship it even. The cat reminds us of the stories of hypocritical cats named Dadhikarṇa and Tīkṣṇadaṁṣṭra that feigned penitence on the banks of River Gaṅgā to delude innocent mice into their reach.

[1] Bhāravi, 10th *sarga*, v. 12; 11th *sarga*, v. 36; 12th *sarga*, v. 54.
(i) *Surasariti* paramtapodhigacchan vidhṛtapiśaṅga = bṛhajjaṭākalāpaḥ |
(ii) Vivikte'smin nage bhūyaḥ plāvite *Jahnukanyayā* |
(iii) Kacchānte *surasarito* nidhāya senām anvitaḥ sa katipayaiḥ kirāta varyaiḥ |

[2] *Vana*, 90, 27—Ṛṣayo ... namasyanti devam Nārāyaṇam prabhum ||

Dadhikarṇa's feigned penance which was to allure unsuspecting hare and sparrow into his reach, was performed on a little island in Gaṅgā according to one version, and on the bank of a river (name not specified) according to another. The cat is described in the fable as "standing with one eye closed, with the arms raised, with half his feet touching the earth, turned towards the Sun", the very pose in which we find it depicted in the sculpture. The story of the penitent cat is also narated in the *Ulūkadautya parva* of the *Mahābhārata*[1]. A very interesting explanation drawn from local tradition is that the cat is performing penance after eating part of "Kriṣṇa's butter-ball" (a huge rock placed over the Arjuna's penance relief) in order that the sea in front of it (the relief is overlooking the Bay of Bengal) may dry up and it may be possible for the cat to have an endless supply of food in the shape of fish exposed, in addition to the mice (already in his power).[2] The ingenuity of the sculptor in showing the penitent cat is not only to entertain the spectator by providing humour (*hāsya*) as in a drama (*dṛśya*) but also to bring out beyond any doubt the idea of River Gaṅgā. And the importance of River Gaṅgā lies in the fact that she served as the back-ground in both the stories, (in the *Badarī-vana* of the earlier one as well as in the Indrakīla of the latter) and now gives the sculptor the means to connect the two together in the manner described above. Thus Ananda Coomaraswamy, Goloubew, Rodin and Jouveau Dubreuil were right when they took the river to be Gaṅgā because of the Nāga, Nāginī figures in it and the penitent cat on its bank, but however denied its association with Arjuna, on the ground that Bhagīratha, also a penitent, was responsible for Gaṅgā's descent to the mortal world for the beatitude of his ancestors and that therefore the scene related to Gaṅgā's descent as a result of Bhagīratha's penance.[3]

Against the "Bhagīratha-theory" and in support of our identification as "Arjuna's penance" the following points have to be stressed:—

[1] *Mahābhārata, Ulūkadautya parva*; Udyoga. *adhyāya* 160, vv. 16—41. *Pañcatantra*, (Bombay edition, No. III), p. 56; (ed. Kosegarten), p. 165.

[2] Caar, *Seven Pagodas*, p. 200; Jagadisa Iyer, *South Indian Shrines*, p. 173, f.n.4.

[3] A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 108.

1. The bowing and emaciated seated figure in front of the Viṣṇu shrine is Nara, who later on becomes Arjuna. The god within the shrine is Acyuta or Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu) whose *aṁśa* was Nara and with whom in his aspect as Arjuna he was associated. Bhagīratha's portrayal in front of Kṛṣṇ or Viṣṇu is not appropriate. Ananda Coomaraswamy's identification of the god within the shrine as Śiva[1] is his wish, to suit his Bhagīratha theory. The god is Viṣṇu, with whom Bhagīratha was not concerned in his attempt to get Gaṅgā flow down.

2. River Gaṅgā receives her prominent place in this sculpture as the connecting link between the *Badarīvana* episode and the Indrakīla episode.

3. The emaciated appearance of Nara in front of the shrine, and of Arjuna above is to convince the spectator that the two are one and the same person (Nara = Arjuna).

4. Details such as, lion crouching under Nara's *pīṭha* and recumbent deer in an attitude of ease and safety, though in the vicinity of wild animals, are common to the Deogarh relief of Nara-Nārāyaṇa and the relief of Mahābalipuram.

Additional strength is given to the "Arjuna's penance" theory by a careful examination of the details of carving to the left of, or in the immediate vicinity of the penitent Arjuna. From the extreme left end to the right, where stands Arjuna, is laid out the wooded part of the Indrakīla hill with lions, deer, monkey, rabbit, lizard (Tamil *uḍumbu*), bird and turtle. The lions, of which five can be made out, are in various stages of activity characteristic of their life. While three are lying in their caves, one stands erect as though curious to know what was happening around it, and the fifth at the extreme left end springs up on obviously hearing some noise or movement. The sculptor associates the rearing lion with a party of hunters (*kirātas*), four of whom are shown in a line marching towards where Arjuna and Śiva are depicted, while the fifth is shown farther up, above Śiva, with his body below the waist concealed by rocks. All the *Kirātas* have moustaches, and wear loin cloths. In front of the rearing lion at the extreme left is a *Kirāta* with an intervening tree between the two. His left hand holds a bow. His

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

hair is secured in a top-knot. His loin-cloth covers his thigh and seems to be of leather. A reed (*patra kuṇḍala*) is inserted in his left ear, while his right ear is empty. His moustache is prominent. He is seemingly unaware of the springing lion behind him. Another hunter walks ahead of him carrying a load (provisions?) on a *kāvaḍi* (*bańk*) arranged on his left shoulder. His moustache, hair in top-knot, a loin cloth (*kaupīna*) and empty right ear are to be noted. He is shown as getting up a high rock. A tree is shown between him and the first *Kirāta*. In front of the second *Kirāta*, a monkey squatting on a rock, a rabbit with alert ears about to bolt away into safety, a large lizard or more probably an *uḍumbu* and bird sitting on a tree are shown. Below them a lion crouching in its hiding place and an inactive antelope (long horns) standing at ease just in front of the lion, while a *Kirāta* (the third in our list) with stern face, whiskers, beard and a loin-cloth of leather, is walking very near them holding his bow firmly in his right hand and adjusting with his left hand a bag of provisions on his left shoulder, constitute a puzzling study, for, animals like deer, naturally timid, are walking with ease in front of lions, monkeys watch undisturbed, lions do not leap on their prey though near and hunters though with bows, do not hit the lion, the deer, or the rabbit though they are close. An explanation for this is found in Bhāravi's *Kirātārjuniyam*.[1] When Śiva's *gaṇas* transformed themselves into hunters and accompanied Śiva to Indrakīla, making noise in the forest, the animals which were thus roused, forgot their natural enmity, and moved side by side. Bhāravi's explanation of this miracle is that in the face of a big catastrophe or against a big common enemy, animals combine, though normally antagonistic or hostile to each other.[2]

Another hunter with prominent moustache, loin cloth and a *Kāvaḍi* of provisions on his left shoulder marches ahead of the third one described above. In front of him are a deer and a lioness (back to back) which forgetting their own hostility are looking out with obvious composure. A party of three dwarfish *Gaṇas* are depicted on an elevated rock in front of

[1] 6th *sarga*, v. 34; 12th *sarga*, v. 46

Navirodhinī ruṣaṁ iyāya pathi mṛgavihanga saṁhatiḥ |
Ghnanti sahajaṁ api bhūribhiyaḥ samamāgataḥ sapadi vairaṁ āpadaḥ ||46||

[2] Mallināṭha while commenting on Bhāravi's 12th *sarga*, v. 46 says "Na hi saṁghātavyasaneṣu prajāyate vairānubandhaḥ iti bhāvaḥ."

the fourth hunter. In the foreground and in front of the lioness, a slow moving turtle and ahead of the latter a darting antelope constitute a good study of slow and quick motion. Below the forest scene described above is the unfinished part of the rock which is nearly one fourth in proportion to the whole bas-relief. That forest scenes were mostly meant to be shown on this unfinished part is evident by some of the cubes, vertically below the row of lioness, turtle and darting antelope described above, showing a recumbent antelope in one, an advancing deer in another, and three lionesses at rest, each in a cave. Two of the lionesses at the bottom of the unfinished rock are in a line with the crouching lion under Nara's *pīṭha*. Some of the dwarf-fish *gaṇas* that followed Śiva disguised as *Kirātas* have been described above. Eight of his *gaṇas* in their pristine form are shown to the left of the penitent Arjuna, two at the extreme left end, three on a rocky elevation behind Śiva, and three by the side of Śiva, two on the left of Śiva and one on the right between Arjuna and Śiva. One of the *gaṇas* on Śiva's left holds a conch-shell trumpet (dundubhi) while the other holds something indistinct which Mr. Longhurst thinks is a *cāmara*.[1] The *Gaṇa* on Śiva's proper left (Pl. V) has received special attention at the hands of the sculptor who has depicted him with a conventional lion's head (*Kīrtimukha*) across his fat little belly. Such *gaṇas* are described in the *Rāmāyana*[2] and are popular in Ancient Indian Sculpture as *Kumbhāṇḍas* at Amarāvati, Ghaṇṭaśāla, Sārnāth, Ajaṇṭā, and Kāveripākkam.[3] This *Kumbhāṇḍa gaṇa* carries in his right hand a trident (not flywhisk as Longhurst noted) similar to what Śiva, whom he follows, holds in his lower right hand. *Patra-kuṇḍalas* can be noticed in his ears.

Śiva appears big and his stature is dignified; his iconographical details led Longhurst to identify the form as Bhikṣāṭana.[4] The resemblance is but superficial, the *gaṇas* and the darting antelope below in a line (vertical) to Śiva's lower left hand (indicating *varada* and pointing to the scene below) lending support to the identification. But Bhikṣāṭana should be nude, wear

[1] *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, p. 44.
[2] *Rāmāyaṇa*, iii, 69, 27. They are called *Kumbhāṇḍas*.
[3] Sivaramamurti, *Amarāvati sculptures*, Pl. III, fig. 5.
[4] *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, p. 43.

pādukās, carry a *ḍhakkā* (kettle-drum) and is seldom shown with the *pināka* or trident. In the sculpture Śiva is represented as Bhāravi describes him.[1] He has the *pināka* in his lower right hand ; his left lower is spread as in *varada* and points down presumably meant to draw our attention to the scene carved below. The upper right hand held something (now missing) and the upper left holds an axe. As Śiva holds the axe and antelope in his upper hands, the empty upper right hand which is in *kaṭaka*, the pose for holding probably held the antelope. Is the antelope darting below Śiva the antelope that slipped out of his upper right hand? A *jaṭāmakuṭa*, long *yajñopavīta* of a single thick chord, loin-cloth up to the knee, *patra-kuṇḍala* in the left ear and a *kuṇḍala* (ring like) in the right ear are depicted appropriately. That he carries the moon (*Candra*) on his head is not conventionalised by depicting a crescent moon (*Candra-kalā*) on his head as is always the case, but by actually showing *Candra* as a divine hovering figure over his head. A halo behind *Candra* distinguishes him. A detached representation of *Candra* to bring out the idea that Śiva is *Candra-śekhara*, a darting antelope below to suggest that he is the handsome Bhikṣāṭana, the form in which he roamed till he reached Brahmakapāla in Himālaya, and a trident in his right hand to suggest that he is *Pināka*pāṇi are adequately stressed by the sculptor who was presumbaly influenced by Bhāravi's verses particularly those that are attributed to Indra when he, advised his son to worship Śiva[2] and verses attributed later on to Arjuna when after the combat he beheld Śiva with divine eyes.[3] Indra wanted his son to please the Pināki. Arjuna describes Śiva in verses in which stress is laid on his Bhiksāṭāna sport (18th *sarga*, v. 31), the moon-crest of Śiva (v. 32) and his trident (v. 45). As *pināka* means both trident and bow, the trident that Śiva holds in the sculpture suggests on the one hand that Śiva is Pināka*pāṇi* generally and that in the present case he is out to bless his devotee Arjuna by conferring on him the *pināka* in the shape of *Pāśupatāstra*. This double *entendre* brings out the ingenuity and superior skill of the sculptor. Of special interest to us is that

[1] Bhāravi, 18th *sarga*, vv. 15-31, 32, 45 and 46.
[2] 11th *sarga*, V. 81—Prīte Pināķini.
[3] 18th *sarga*, V. 31—na rāgi cetaḥ paramā vilāsitā. . . .|
18th *sarga*, V. 32—kalā himāṁśośca samaṁ cakāsati||
18th *sarga*, V. 45— . . . bibhrat triguṇaparivāraprahāraṇaḥ||

Śiva is represented here exactly as Bhāravi says Arjuna beheld him. The relevant verses from 18th *sarga are*:—

Atha himaśucibhasmabhūṣitaṁ śirasi virājitam=Indulekhayā|
Svavapur=atimanoharaṁ Haraṁ dadhatam=udīkṣya nanāma Pāṇḍavaḥ || 15||
.....Na rāgi cetaḥ paramāvilāsitā...||31||
.....kalā himāṁśoś-ca samaṁ cakāsati||32||
Kṛtadhṛti parivanditenoccakaiḥ Gaṇapatibhir=abhinnaromodgamaiḥ|
Tapasi kṛtaphale phalajyāyasī stutir-iti jagade hareḥ sūnunā||21||
Atha śaśadharamauleḥ abhyanujñām=avāpya
Tridaśapatipurogāḥ pūrṇakāmāya tasmai|| 46||

These verses draw our attention irresistably to the fact that the moon is on Śiva's head and to the bewitchingly handsome appearance that Śiva bore which even *ṛṣipatnīs* (wives of sages) could not resist. The applauding *Gaṇas* which, abandoning their *kirāta*-disguise stood around Śiva, received due emphasis at the hands of both Bhāravi, the poet, and the Pallava sculptor of Mahābalipuram who translated Bhāravi's verses into stone. One cannot imagine a more handsome at the same time bewitching form of Śiva than that of Bhikṣātana which induced even the wives of the forest sages to pine away for him. Such indeed is Śiva in the sculpture, surrounded appropriately by the applauding *gaṇas*.

The *gaṇa* of the *Kumbhāṇḍa* type with a lion-face on his belly and a trident in his right hand may represent *Pāśupatāstra* or *"Raudram-astram,"*[1] which Bhāravi describes as "tanuṁ bhīmāṁ bibhrat triguṇa-parivārapraharaṇaḥ" (verse 45) and the *Mahābhārata* describes as waiting upon Pārtha (*Vana, Kirātaparva,* vv. 20,21). Mallinātha comments on "triguṇa-parivāra" as standing for the trident (*triśūla.*)

The introduction of *Candra* above Śiva serves a double purpose. It shows Śiva as "Śaśadharamauli" as Arjuna beheld him[2] and also brings out

[1] Bhāravi, 18th *sarga*, v. 44.—For description of *pāśupatāstra* in the Śaivāgamas as a separate godling, see Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography* pp. 216-7. Four faces with three eyes in each, tusks (*daṁṣṭrā*), stiff hair, terrific moustache, four arms with spear, mace, conch and sword constitute the description of this godling who is to be shown seated on a *padmāsana*.

[2] Bhāravi, 18th *sarga*, v. 46.

the idea that the grand event of "Arjuna's penance, victory and Śiva's announcement" was witnessed by the stellars along with the terrestrials and celestials. The stellars (*jyotir-maṇḍala*) are represented by *Candra* in the manner described above and by *Sūrya* with a halo behind his head symmetrically posed on the right side of the river in the same alignment. Both *Candra* and *Sūrya* have one of their hands raised symmetrically as in adoration (*stava*). The celestial group and demi-gods are adequately represented by pairs of *Vidyādharas, Kinnaras* and *Gandharvas* hovering in the sky. Four pairs of *Vidyādharas* (male and female) with hands suggesting singing are in a line on Arjuna's proper right. Further more two *Kinnara* couples (half bird and half human) are shown, the female in both beating time with cymbals (*tāla*), and the male in one playing on bamboo flute (*veṇu*) and the male in the other with the bamboo flute at rest and singing vocally as his raised left hand purports to indicate. Kālidāsa calls *Kinnaras* "amara-mithunas" whose flutes filled with wind make pleasant music[1]. Above the last *Kinnara* couple and behind *Candra*, the upper part of a *Kirāta* is shown. His hidden appearance and perhaps stealthy approach alone—for his *kirata* companions are far away from him—would recall Bhāravi's description of Śiva as a *Kirāta* approaching Arjuna in the first instance on the track of his game, after leaving his *Kirāta* army below in the bog of the Gaṅgā and taking care to conceal his body behind bushes and stones[2]. Does he then represent the *Kirāta* form of Śiva? His contiguity with Śiva and *Candra* may add evidence to the probability. He may be the *Kirāta* form of Śiva or any *Kirāta*, as Bhāravi says a handful of *Kirātas* followed Śiva.[3]

It will be clear that the Śiva blessing Arjuna is Śiva as Pinākī, as Candraśekhara and even as Bhikṣātana (?), and not Śiva as Gaṅgādhara. Gaṅgādhara must be Śiva's form if we accept the theory of "Bhagīratha's penance". As Gaṅgādhara he should stand with his right leg planted vertically on the earth and the left slightly bent. His upper right arm should be raised and support a braid of his locks on which the River Gaṅgā is supposed

[1] *Meghasandeśa*, 1, 18, 58 ; *Oriental Art*, Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 4-5 ; O. C. Gangoly, A Gupta pillar at the Museum in Benaras, pp. 1-5.

[2] & [3] Bhāravi, sarga 12, V. 54.—kacchānte surasarito nidhāya senāṁ anvitaḥ . . .| Pracchannas= tarugahanaiḥ sagulmajālaih laksmīvān=anupada=masyasampratasthe ||

to descend. This form was known to the Pallava architects of Mahendravarman I and Narasiṁhavarman II who got it carved at Tiruchirāpalḷi[1] and Mahābalipuram.[2] When the Pallavas had a clear form of Gaṅgādhara known to them, their failure to adopt it in the relief under description was because they were out to show the God that Arjuna sought, the *Kirātārjuna-mūrti*. In the praises that Arjuna pours out on beholding Śiva, there is no epithet referring to Gaṅgādhara, either in Bhāravi's version or even in the *Mahābhārata* version.[3]

The right half of the bas-relief is only a continuation of the list of beholders, and applauders of the grand event. They are of the various regions, terrestrial, aquatic, aerial, stellar and celestial. The elephant-herd, monkeys and cat and mice of the *terrestrial*, Nāgas and Nāginīs and reptiles of the *aquatic*, and the geese, peacocks and peahen of the *skies* have already been described. In a broad sheet of rock, facing or marching towards the river and Arjuna, are arrayed Sūrya, dwarfish *Gaṇas*, *Kinnara*-couples and *Vidyādhara* couples with a number of antelopes and lions. A lion with its tail in a loop is shown on the extreme right. The *Gaṇas*, *Kinnaras* and *Vidyādharas* go in couples. While the *Gaṇas* move quaintly on the earth because of their fat belly, the *Vidyādhara* and *Kinnara* pairs hover elegantly in the sky. The *Vidyādharas* are singing. The male in each *Kinnara* pair plays on the flute (*veṇu*), while the female in every pair beats time with cymbals (*tāla*). Two pairs at the extreme right end are of men hovering in the sky and hence represent *Siddhas* (a class of demi-gods). The *Siddhas* fly and appear anywhere at any moment. They inhabit *Bhuvar-loka*.[4] Thus the whole bas-relief affords the attendant paraphernalia of the grand

[1] Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part I, Frontispiece ; V. Smith, *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, 1930, pl. 89.

[2] Krishna Sastri, *Two statues of Pallava Kings and five Pallava Inscriptions at Mahabalipuram*. p. 2.

[3] *Mahābhārata*, *vana*, XXXIX, VV. 65-67, 72-80 ; XL, 8, 9, 14, 27.

[4] T. N. Ramachandran, *Archaeological discoveries along Mainamati and Lalmai ranges*, p. 222. [B. C. Law Volume, Part II.]

Siddhas, who are immortal, inhabit *Bhuvar-loka* which is between earth and heaven. According to the *Vāyu purāṇa* 88000 of them occupy the sky north of the Sun and south of the Sapta-ṛṣi-maṇḍala, i.e., the great bear. Though immortal, they are said to live only to the end of a *kalpa*. In later mythology they are sometimes confused with *Sādhyas* or take their place. They are of great purity and perfection possessing the eight *siddhis* or supernatural faculties.

event, "Arjuna's penance", versified by the poet Bhāravi who was celebrated for grand ideas.[1] His work was translated into permanent stone by a galaxy of sculptors and artists whose presiding star was Mahendravarman I, the Royal artist.

While discussing the date of Bhāravi and his possible association with the Pallava King Mahendravarman I it was remarked[2] that there was at Mahābalipuram an inferior and smaller representation of the relief just described. Either it was designed earlier than the big relief described above but dropped either because of technical flaw, or that it was a later copy of the great relief and relegated to less skilled hands. The absence of cube-scarp is worth noting. In view of its importance to our study of the subject in its relation to the great relief it is described here.[3]

The carving is on the face of a rock, a furlong to the south of the bigger relief. Curiously enough this rock also has a cleft, splitting it into two, but the cleft is very wide. On the eastern surface of the split rocks is carved in rough relief a duplicate representation of the story of Arjuna's penance which Jouveau Dubreuil described as "La descente de la Gaṅgā a Mahābalipuram."[4] But, for the very reasons adduced in the case of the bigger relief, the inferior relief should also be considered as representing the story of Arjuna's penance. Unfinished figures of Śiva and of Arjuna standing on one leg with raised arms (*ūrdhvabāhu*) stand out in bold relief on the upper part of the southern end of the rock. Other details such as temple, ascetics in front, animals, worshippers etc., had not yet been outlined. The rock at this point is badly cracked as though struck by lightning. Mr. Longhurst presumes that this was probably the reason why the work was unfinished. Towards the wide cleft a number of worshippers, semi-divine beings, birds and animals including elephants and antelopes are turned. The figures of Arjuna and Śiva are removed far away from the cleft. In contrust to this we find in the bigger relief that the two stand by the side of the fissure and that their relative position is altered. If the present relief was meant to

[1] *Upamā* Kālidāsasya Bhāraver=arthagauravam |

[2] See above, page 12.

[3] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, pl. xxxiii(a).

[4] *Etudes d'Orientalisme*, (a la memoire de Raymone Linossier), pp. 293-7, pl. xl.

be finished, the wide cleft and the crack would have had to be filled up with masonry and plastered over to conceal defects. On this moot point Mr. Longhurst offers his expert and interesting remarks which are quoted here[1]:

> "* * * Whether this was ever actually done will never be known, but it is a curious fact that several of the bas-reliefs on each side of the cleft show signs of having been plastered over and the details of the figures picked out in that material, in the same manner as may be noticed on the north side of the Shore Temple. It may have been merely a kind of experimental model for the great finished work at the other end of the hill."

The Śiva temple built on the sea shore, popularly called the *Shore temple* was built during the reign of the Pallava King Narasiṁhavarman II (690-715) who bore the title Rājasiṁha[2] and who is best remembered as a great Śaiva devotee and the builder of the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcī. The ruined sculptures in this temple, are of sufficient iconographic interest, and of less artistic interest as they are badly weather-worn. One frieze which Longhurst discovered on the north side of the enclosure wall shows in crude relief part of the story of Arjuna's penance[3] portrayed arfter the big relief. The frieze is in two horizontal rows. Longhurst describes it as showing in the upper panel "the same group of six ascetics, one of them standing on one leg in the act of doing penance, and below, the penitent cat, a monkey, and two deer."[4] He adds "It is obvious where the sculptor got his idea from, and it is also clear that the scene is in no way connected with the story of Arjuna's penance." From this evidence he concludes and agrees with V. Goloubew that the popular name of Arjuna's penance given to the famous rock sculpture at Mahābalipuram is a misnomer.[5]

On the other hand the very reasons Longhurst and Goloubew adduce for this theory help to show that the theme meant here was Arjuna's penance. The occurrence of the penitent cat with trustful mice playing at its feet,

[1] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, pp. 44-45.
[2] Jouveau-Dubreuil, *Ancient History of the Deccan*, p. 70.
[3] A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part III, p. 6, pl. III(a).
[4] *Ibid.*, Part III, p. 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 6 f.n.; *Journal Asiatique*, 1914, pp. 210-2.

the two recumbent deer as below the seated figure of Nara (Arjuna), the monkey and the penitent Arjuna standing on one leg are as can be expected on the banks of River Gaṅgā[1]. The river Gaṅgā and its attendant scenes apply to Arjuna's penance also. Indeed in front of the recumbent deer in the panel under description, the flow of water is indicated by vertical lines as in a water-fall. The six men in this panel whom Longhurst describes as "ascetics" are not all ascetics. One of them who sits at the extreme left end is a sage with a long flowing beard and is addressing a party of three men listening to him eagerly. He is sage Vyāsa (Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana) who visited the Pāṇḍava brothers in Dvaitavana and imparted to Ḍharmaputra in particular the knowledge named in the *Mahābhārata* as *Pratismṛti*, which the latter in turn imparted to Arjuna. Arjuna being commissioned by Vyāsa to go to Indrakīla hill and worship Indra by penance, Arjuna meeting Indra and Indra's advice to him to please Śiva by severe austerities and Arjuna starting these austerities by standing on one leg with hands raised above, etc., are details that followed Vyāsa's visit and advice. To the left (proper) of Vyāsa are the Pāṇḍava brothers, three of them sitting listening, the fourth standing and the fifth at the extreme left (proper) end kneeling and looking behind as though he has also heard Vyāsa's advice. The sculptor has shown ingenuity in depicting the five Pāṇḍava brothers to the left of Vyāsa, three listening, one standing in penance and the fifth kneeling yet listening. The upper part of the standing Pāṇḍava is broken, yet his penitent pose with one leg raised and bent singles him out as Arjuna, the Vijayī, who was commissioned to bring victory to the Pāṇḍava cause. All the Pāṇḍava brothers (the heads of four of them alone remain, the upper part of the fourth brother being broken) wear *kirīṭamakuṭas* to suggest their rank as *kṣatriya* princes. The ingenuity of the sculptor can be best appreciated in the study of the kneeling Pāṇḍava at the extreme left end. His head with the *kirīṭamakuṭa* prominent on it, is turned back as though listening to Vyāsa while his body is bent forward and his legs bent as in kneeling suggesting the worship and propitiation of Indra first and Śiva next and the successful end of his penance. Thus, in the span of a small frieze the sculptor has attempted theepitomised story of Arjuna's penance

[1] For details and reasons see discussion on the bigger relief, above, page 79.

(*saṁkṣepa*) as taking place on *Gaṅgā-tīra*. He has ably depicted the *prologue* of the drama by introducing Vyāsa on the right end who commences the story, centred the actual drama by introducing the penitent Arjuna, and represented the *epilogue* by making Arjuna kneel to receive the award from his benevolent god, and has skilfully linked them all, by arraying the Pāṇḍava brothers in one continuous line, as though the dramatis personae are filed in a row as in a drama's '*Finis.*' Such a juxtaposition is meant to gratify the spectator as in a *dṛśya* (drama), at the same time present the story from right (proper) to left in good continuity. The carving belongs to the 8th century A.D. on grounds of style and being an epitomised version speaks for the continued popularity of this theme.

Our task of finding out places in South India likely to have associations with the story of Arjuna's penance and Śiva as Kirāta is helped largely by the *Devāram* songs and the hymns of the Śaiva saints and apostles of South India called *Nāyanmārs* who have sung on 274 Śaiva holy places (pāḍalpeṟṟa sthalaṅgaḷ).[1] Those that interest us are now examined.

Chidambaram

Chidambaram as the shrine of "Dancing Śiva" Naṭarāja, is one of the monuments where the *līlās* of Śiva find due representation, in stone or metal or in painting. A relief-sculpture, from Chidambaram has been figured by H. Krishna Sastri in his *South Indian Gods and Goddesses*, fig. 92. It shows *Kirātārjunamūrti* under a prabhā (*tiruvāsi*) without Umā but with the figure of Arjuna in miniature at the right hand bottom with his hands folded in worship (*añjali*). Śiva's description agrees with the *Kāraṇāgama* where he is described as having three eyes and four arms with axe, antelope, bow and arrow respectively. A *jaṭāmakuṭa* on head and *yajñopavīta* on the chest, can be noticed. Though a specimen of late Coḷa art the relief reveals rigid fidelity to the Āgamic description of the God and is of poor plastic quality.[2]

[1] The lives of the Nāyanmārs are recorded in the Tamil work *Periyapurāṇam* of Śekkiḷār who lived in the 12th century A.D. as a contemporary of Kulottunga II. In the 10th or 11th century, the canonical works of South Indian Saivism were arranged more or less in their modern form by Naṁbi Āṇḍār Naṁbi, who was also its first hagiographer and whose work formed the basis of the far more elaborate *Periya Purāṇam* of Śekkiḷār.

[2] *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, pp. 142-3, fig. 92; *Journal of the Annamalai University*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 30.

Tiruveṭkaḷam

Tiruveṭkaḷam, 2 miles east of Chidambaram (S. Rly.) in South Arcot District, is described as the arena where Arjuna had his feud with Śiva as *Kirāta* (*vēḍa*) and received his bow (*pāśupatāstra*) from Śiva. There are metal figures of Śiva as *Kirāta*, of Umā and of Arjuna in the local temple of Pāśupatésvara, representing this event.

The image of Śiva (pl. vii) which is of bronze, 23.2" high, cast solid, is a master-piece in metal-casting of the *cire perdue* or "lost-wax" process. It has been assigned on grounds of style to the 7th century[1] or early half of the 8th century A.D. As it combines the excellence of both Pallava and Early Coḷa art it may be appropriate to place it in the transition period between the two dynasties, the Pallava and the Coḷa. Though supposed to be the hunter (*Kirāta*) that gave battle to the penitent Arjuna, the sculptor has shown Śiva as an elegant young figure of great beauty. Standing within an aureole of flames (*prabhāvalī*) in *ābhaṅga* pose with the weight of his body resting on his left leg and with two bends of the body, one at the waist and the other at the neck, and with a bewitching tilt of the head, the god is out to demonstrate his *Kirāta*-function by posing his hands, the right in *kaṭaka* as though it is holding an arrow and the left raised as if it is holding the top of a bow. The bow and arrow are not actually there. The image being an *utsavavigraha* meant to be taken out in procession on festive days or nights, a bow and arrow will be attached to the hands on such occasions. A *jaṭāmakuṭa* on head, with the design of what seem to be the prongs of a trident prominently marked in front perhaps to bring out that he is *Pināki*, a small third eye on his forehead to stress that he is *Trinetra*, a single necklet, *yajñopavīta* of three strands with its knot (*brahma-sūtra*) evident above the left nipple, *pādasara* on legs and *valaya* on wrists, the right ear with a *patra-kuṇḍala* and the left ear empty, and a loin-cloth kept in position by a girdle, with a *kīrtimukha-clasp* and a central tassel are the noteworthy embellishments over a body of ravishing beauty. Locks of hair fall down the neck at the back, two fall on to the front, one on each shoulder. Śiva stands on a round *padmāsana* attached to a rectangular *bhadrāsana*, the latter provided with holes and sockets for securing the image to poles

[1] *Journal of the Annamalai University*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 28-47.



during processions. On the recessed face of the *bhadrāsana*, in front, can be seen the figure of Arjuna kneeling and in miniature with his hands folded in *añjali* (worship) as in the sculpture from Chidambaram described above.

According to the temple priest the image was excavated from a mound a few yards to the south of the present shrine, and that it had then the image of Arjuna, now standing separate in the shrine on a modern *padmāsana*, socketed on the left and a broken image of Indra on the right and that the image of Indra was used up for the sake of its old metal for making other *utsava-vigrahas*. If we accept his statement the presence of Indra in the group has to be explained in the same manner as we saw above (page 58) in the case of the sculpture from Cenna Keśavasvāmī temple, Pushpagiri, where a sage is shown in miniature (as though of the background) between Arjuna and Śiva. On the analogy of the Tiruveṭkalam group the sage in the Pushpagiri relief is Indra, who as we saw came to Arjuna as an old sage and testing him advised him to worship Pinākī. After obtaining the *Pāśupatāstra* from Śiva, Arjuna goes to Indra in the chariot that Mātali brought to him at Indra's bidding. Arjuna's meeting with Ūrvaśī in *Indraloka* and the curse of impotence he received at her hands are important events in the career of Arjuna which being in the mind of the artist are perhaps suggested (*dhvani*) by the introduction of the additional figure of Indra in Pushpagiri as well as at Tiruveṭkalam. Whether the broken image represented Indra or not, it is obvious that there was originally an image fixed into the right socket of the pedestal on which Śiva as *Kirāta* stands. In the centre of each socket is a hole which presumably accommodated a protruding rod from below. Though the image of Arjuna has a modern *padmāsana*, it reveals a little part of its old pedestal grafted into it. If we do not take into account its modern *padmāsana*, the image of Arjuna which is 17.7″ high, could very well have stood within the aureole under the raised left arm of Śiva. Such an arrangement in front of or under an aureole of three images in the round, in the present case of Śiva, Indra on Śiva's right and Arjuna on Śiva's left, is very rare. The Pushpagiri relief is an example in stone relief in which Pārvatī is an additional member.[1]

[1] Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, fig. 91, p. 143—Or is the sage in miniature, Arjuna in his previous stage of a penitent with overgrown *jaṭās* and beard? In any case he is not Śiva's attendant as Krishna Sastri supposes.

A bronze image of Pārvati is shown separately at Tiruveṭkalam, and judging by its workmanship and details of decoration, is a very late addition, probably of the very late Coḷa period, in the 13th century A.D. The image 21″ high, is made of a whitish-looking alloy, and presents features such as *karaṇḍamakuṭa* with a *śiraścakra* behind, conventional ringlets falling down the neck, a round face with sharp features and eyes drilled, *makara-kuṇḍalas* in the ears, the marital tie "*tāli*" closely fitting the neck, necklaces, *yajñopavīta*, armlets, wristlets, *nūpuras*, *pādasaras* and an under-garment falling in symmetrical folds round the legs almost down to the anklets and kept in position by a *mekhalā* of four separate bands. One end of the under-garment is taken backward through the fork of the leg, while the other end hangs elegantly close to the left leg. Pārvatī's right hand is in the *kaṭaka* pose for holding a flower (lotus) while her left drops gently in the posture of *lola-hasta*, like the tail of a cow (*govāla*). The image of *Pārvati* has to be placed on grounds of style and decorative features to the very end of the later Cola period[1] or the very beginning of the early Vijaya-nagara. And this is interesting in its relation to the image of *Kirāta* which as we saw belongs to the early 9th century A.D. (say 800-850 A.D.) or the period of transition between the two dynasties, the Pallava and Coḷa. The consort Pārvatī falls in the transition between the Coḷa and Vijayanagara (say 1300 A.D.).

The metal image of Arjuna which is also worshipped at Tiruveṭkalam, and according to the temple priest said to have originally stood under the same aureole to the right of the *Kirātārjunamūrti*, has to be placed in the Coḷa age somewhere about 1100 A.D. by virtue of the stylised decorative features in contrast to the realistic modelling features of the image of Śiva. The image is 17.7″ high, cast solid, has a *kirīṭamakuṭa* with a *śiraścakra* behind, ringlets of hair (less realistic than those of Śiva) falling down the nape of the neck, *makara-kuṇḍalas* in ears, broad necklace, three-stranded *yajñopavīta*, *udara-bandha* and cross-band called *channavīra*, two quivers with arrows in them attached at the back one to each shoulder, armlets, wristlets, anklets and a loin cloth kept in position by means of three bands arranged one below the other without a suggestion of the *kīrtimukha*

[1] *Joural of the Annamalai University*, Vol. III, p. 42.

clasp that we saw in the case of Śiva. The treatment of the loin cloth is more formal and less realistic than in the case of Śiva ; its folds are in wavy lines in front but are only rough lines behind. One end of the cloth goes backwards and comes out between two of the waist-bands. Arjuna stands in *ābhaṅga* with the weight of his body resting on the left leg, while his arms are folded in *añjali* (pl. ix-b).

The two images of Arjuna and Pārvatī are obviously later additions as warranted by their stylized features. The temple priest's version that at least the image of Arjuna went on the pedestal of Śiva can only mean that sometime in the Coḷa period it was made and fitted into the whole by means of a socket. Thus when the handsome image of Śiva was made at the beginning of the 9th century A.D. there was no separate image of Arjuna and there was no need for it either, for Arjuna was sufficiently represented on the pedestal on its recessed part in front, half-kneeling and with hands folded in *añjali* as the texts require.[1]

The Tiruveṭkalam temple is celebrated in the Devāram songs of Sambandha and Appar, two of the chief Śaiva saints (Nāyanmārs). Appar of the 7th century A.D. sang of Tiruveṭkalam as a place where "veḍanār (*hunter*) lives".[2] *Veḍanār* refers to Śiva as *Kirāta*. Thus the local tradition associating the place with the abode of Veḍanār (Śiva as *Kirāta*) was popular even during the time of Appar[3] (7th century A.D.). The skilful finish, the charm, freedom and ease in the flexioned standing pose of the *Kirāta* image, the way the god holds his hands freed from the bow and arrow, lest the beholder should miss their poise and elegance and the excellent anatomy of the youthful figure together with the song of Appar, would seem to suggest an early date for the image which would fall in the golden age of Pallava Art. For reasons explained above the image bears in fact the best results of the golden ages of both Pallava and early Coḷa (cf. Reliefs in the Tanjore

[1] F. G. Gravely and T. N. Ramachandran, *Catalogue of the South Indian Hindu metal images in the Madras Museum*, p. 16.

[2] *Vēḍanāruṟai Veṭkaḷam.*

[3] Appar was a contemporary of the Pallava King Mahendravarman I, to whose royal patronage and artistic taste we owe as pointed out above the celebrated carving of Arjuna's penance in Mahabalipuram and the translation into stone of Bhāravi's classical poem. As Bhāravi was also Mahendravarman's contemporary, Appar probably knew Bhāravi's excellent poem and the excellent theme of it.

temple) and hence would appropriately find a place in the 9th century A.D., in the transition between the two golden ages. Tiruveṭkaḷam keeps the story of "Arjuna's feud with the *Kirāta*" in human memory in the manner of an annual local festival,[1] whose chief interest lies in a mock-fight between men dressed as hunters and a man dressed as Arjuna.

The Tanjore district including the city of Tanjore formed the cradle of Coḷa art, hagiology and hymnology. It has a number of places sacred to the memory of the *Kirāta* form of Śiva and the penitent Arjuna. Some of them find due place in the songs of the Śaiva *Nāyanmārs*. They are:

1. *Tiruvēṭṭakuḍi*, four miles east of Poraiyar Railway station, where Śiva is said to have appeared in Kirāta form, and to have given *pāśupatāstra* to Arjuna.

2. *Vaḷapputtūr* (*Vāḷoḷippuṛṛūr*) four miles west of Vaithiśvarankoil said to be connected with Arjuna. Śiva is believed to have hidden the sword (*vāḷ*) of Arjuna in an ant-hill here.

3. *Vijayamangai* in Kumbakonam taluk, and adjoining Tiruppurambiyam (an old battle field) where Arjuna is said to have worshipped Śiva and obtained *pāśupatāstra*.

4. *Pāmaṇi alias Pāṭaḷīccuram*, two miles north of Mannarkoil where Arjuna was popular as Dhanañjaya.[2]

5. *Kīḷaiyūr*, 11 miles from Tirutturaipundi, on the Tirutturaipundi—Nagappattinam Road, is celebrated for the worship of *liṅgas* installed by the Pāṇḍavas. The *Sthala-Purāṇa* of the local Śiva temple describes how the Pāṇḍavas came to South India on pilgrimage during their exile and how they came to Kiḷaiyūr village and each set up a *liṅga* in his name for

[1] The festival lasts for 2 days in the month of Vaiśākha. On the morning of the second day the image of Arjuna is taken to a place called "Tapas tope" or the grove of penance, to the south west of the temple of Pāśupteśvara. The idea is that Arjuna is supposed to do penance there to please Pināki and obtain pāśupatāstra. In the afternoon the other two images of Śiva as Kirātārjuṇamūrtir and Pārvatī (Umā) are taken to the grove of penance and a mock-fight is staged between Śiva and Arjuna. In the evening the fight is over and an image of Śiva as mounted on the bull (vṛṣabhārūḍha) with Pārvati by his side are introduced, and Śiva gives Arjuna the *pāśupatāstra*. The festival appears to be in observance only for the past 50 years. For details see *Journal of Annamalai University*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 28.

[2] *Dhanañjaya* is one of the 10 names beginning with "Arjuna" that pious Hindus repeat during thunders to avoid their evil effects.

worship. The *Sthala-purāṇa* only repeats what *Mahābhārata* has already recorded, viz., that Arjuna went on a pilgrimage to sacred places (*tīrthas*) on the coasts of the Southern Ocean, where ascetics resided.

6. *Tirukkoḷili*, near Nāgappaṭṭinam, is celebrated for Pāṇḍava association. An interesting sculpture on the *gopuram* of the local Śiva temple shows Kuntī, Draupadī, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva worshipping a *linga* placed under a tree. Arjuna in the attire of a prince, has his hands folded in worship (*añjali*) while his never-failing *gāṇḍīva* rests on his hand. This sculpture is in contrast to the general rendering of the Arjuna-story in South India, *viz.*, to show him either with Śiva (when it is the *Kirātārjunīya* story) or with Kṛṣṇa when he is Pārtha with Kṛṣṇa as his *sārathi* (Pārthasārathi), and never alone.

7. *Kumbakonam.* The central shrine of the Draupadī Amman temple at Kumbakonam, has a bronze image of Arjuna, 3'8" high with a Tamil inscription on its pedestal giving its date as 1873 A.D. Though superficially similar to Kodaṇḍa-Rāma images, the Arjuna-image under description is without *yajñopavīta*, and *kirīṭamakuṭa*, and bears on the right shoulder a quiver (*tūṇīra*) with an open *makara*-mouth showing over the right shoulder.

8. *Polagam, Nannilam Taluk.* Polagam is famous for its treasure-trove finds of bronzes, one of which, (so small that it is mistaken for a toy) now in the Madras Museum collection, represents Arjuna in one of his archery poses, when with his right hand raised and left hand lowered he is said to have shot his arrows from down upwards. The pose recalls the great event in the early career of Arjuna when by looking at the reflection of a fish-target in the water he shot correctly at the target above and won thereby the hand of Draupadī. Arjuna is represented in this image with *patra-kuṇḍalas*, *channavīra*, and other ornaments but without *yajñopavīta*, or beard or moustache. The image is of poor artistic merit and cannot date earlier than the 17th century A.D.

9. *Tiruccengāṭṭānkuḍi*, in Nannilam Taluk. Though the place is mainly associated with the General Śiruttoṇḍar who served the Pallava King Narasiṁhavarman I[1], the local Śiva temple contains a beautiful representation in stone in the round of Śiva as *Kirātamūrti* with Umā by his side, the form in

[1] See above, page 50.

which he appeared to bless Arjuna as given in the *Mahābhārata*. Arjuna is however absent. The sculpture has been figured in Gopinatha Rao's *Elements of Hindu Iconography*.[1] Śiva and Umā are standing on an oval *padmāsana*. Śiva carries in his upper hands axe and antelope, and a bow and arrow in his lower hands. Umā, who stands to Śiva's left has a lotus flower in her right hand while her left hand hangs down loosely like the cow's tail (*govāla*) in the *lola-hasta* pose. The decorative details of both mark the sculpture out as one of the best results of early Vijayanagara art of the 14th century A.D.

10. *Tirutturaipūṇḍi* in Tirutturaipūṇḍi Taluk. The *sthala-purāṇam* of this place tells us that Tirutturaipūṇḍi was known as *Bilvāraṇya-kṣetra*, that Arjuna visited the place in the course of his southern pilgrimage and set up a *liṅga* as commanded by the presiding *devatā* of the local temple and moved on after receiving boons from the God. A bronze image (28" high) in the local Śiva temple called Bhava Auṣadheśvara temple does full justice to the representation of Śiva as a hunter.[2] Fierce moustache, beard well trimmed, *patrakuṇḍalas* in both ears, hair on head secured in a side-knot with a frontal frieze on the forehead, necklaces, *channavīra*, armlets, wristlets, anklets and *pādasaras*, and shorts with side tassels and median loops are the note-worthy features of this image which holds the hands, as in Tiruveṭkalam, in position to hold the bow and arrow. A *padmāsana* attached to a *bhadrāsana*, on which the image stands, reveals two holes suggesting the use of the image as an *utsava-vigraha*. In common with the Tiruveṭkalam image it has the same hand poses and bends in the body but with the appropriate difference of the ages. The elegance and dexterity of the former is replaced by rigidity and ruggedness of the latter and for this reason would place the latter in the 16th or 17th century A.D. when Viyayanagara art had become conventional and highly stylised. In fact by its beard and general appearance the Tirutturaipūṇḍi bronze would recall the Maharatta warrior as its model. And Tanjore was ruled by the Maharattas from the 17th century onwards.

[1] Pl. LII, fig. 1.

[2] This image has been described as Arjuna in the *Hindu*, Madras, July 16, 1950. There is no basis for this identification. The pose goes against Arjuna-identification and compares well with that of Śiva (*Kirātamūrti*) from Tiruveṭkalam, Chidambaram and Tanjore.

Tanjore

Tanjore, the Coḷa capital, came into prominence during the reign of Rājarāja I (985-1014). Rājarāja, hailed as the great, commemorated his eventful reign by raising the Śiva temple, then called Rājarājeśvara and now as the Great temple of Bṛhadīśvara, which stands to this day as the best product of Tamil architecture during a splendid period of South Indian history. Though simple in design, the temple is remarkable for its stupendous proportions, in a court, 750′ × 250′, with a dominating *vimāna* rising over the *sanctum* to nearly 200′ height on a square base of about 100′. The decorative motifs, bas-reliefs and sculptures of the temple and of the *vimāna* in particular, delicate chiselling which characterises the entire carving including the inscriptions, are unparalleled in South Indian architecture and sculpture. The whole leaves an impression in the mind of the beholder that it is stupendous yet wonderful, impressive yet pleasing. To this we may add that its bas-reliefs are highly informative, the contents of some being the sports (*līlās*) of Śiva, including his *Kirāta* form and Arjuna's penance.

An image of *Kirātārjuna*-deva ('Krātārjuniyadevar' in one inscription and 'Krātārjunadevar' in another) is referred to in two inscriptions of Rājendra Coḷa I (1012-1044 A.D.), both found on the south wall (first tier) of the *vimāna* of the central shrine of the temple itself. The portion relating to the image of *Kirātārjuna* in the first inscription dated in the 6th year of Rājendra Coḷa reads thus:—

> "The minister Udayadivākaran Tillaiyāliyār, *alias*, Rājarāja Muvendavēḷār, a native of Kāñcivāyil, deposited thirteen *kāśu* for the sacred food and other requirements (of the image) of Krātārju(ni)yadēvar, which he had set up himself."

The second inscription dated in the 10th year of the same king calls the image *Krātārjunadēvar*.[1] H. Krishna Sastri, the author of "South Indian images of gods and goddesses" locates the image of the above inscriptions in a Śiva temple in Tanjore and identifies it as *Kirātārjuna*. This image, which is of copper, is 3 feet high and has been figured by O. C. Gangoly and Ananda

[1] *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. II, Part 1, pp. 90-95, Nos. 9 and 10.

Coomaraswamy.[1] Both Coomaraswamy and Gangoly described it as Gaṅgā-dhara.[2] Coomaraswamy assigns it to the 11th or 12th century and Gangoly to about the 12th century.[3] While on grounds of style we may safely assign the image to the 11th century and the Early Cola period which included the eventful reigns of Rājarāja I who built the great temple of Tanjore and of his illustrious son Rājendra Coḷa I, who built its rival, the Gaṅgaikaṇḍa-coḷapuram temple and to whose reign the two inscriptions of the Tanjore temple referred above belong, we must examine if the image under study actually represents the *Kirātarjuna* form of Śiva or the *Gaṅgādhara* form as O. C. Gangoly and Coomaraswamy described it. Krishna Sastri, Gangoly and Coomaraswamy state that the back two hands held axe and antelope (now missing). Obviously they did not have the emblems, which cannot therefore be said to be missing. While the antelope is common to both the forms (*Kiratārjuna and Gaṅgādhara*), the back right hand of the image is neither lifted up as high as the crown on the head nor holding a *jaṭā* on which should be the figure of Gaṅgā, as normally expected if it were *Gaṅgādhara*.[4] There is nothing to suggest that it is in a "half-dancing pose" as Coomara-swamy describes. The pose of the lower hands rules out the *Gaṅgādhara* possibility for both the hands are in *kaṭaka* suggesting holding and not *varada* and *āliṅgana mudrā* as Gangoly stated. The *kaṭaka* pose suggests

[1] O. C. Gangoly, *South Indian Bronzes*, pl. XIV ; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Selected Examples of Indian Art*, pl. XXVII ; *Visvakarma*, fig. XXVIII ; Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images*, p. 143, f.n. 1.

[2] *Viśvakarma*, pp. 17-18—"standing figure, four-armed. Deer and axe symbols missing from two upper hands. Cobras and skull (?) in head-dress. No ear-ring on proper right, a woman's ear-ring on the proper left. A half-dancing pose. Copper, about twelfth century. In a Śiva temple in Tanjore."

Selected Examples of Indian Art, p. 14—" . . . represents Śiva as Gaṅgādhara "He who bears the river" . . . wonderful repose and graciousness . . . belongs to that southern school of Śaivite sculpture, which owes its inspiration to the development of devotional Śaivism in the centuries immediately preceding ; it may date from the eleventh or twelfth century."

[3] *South Indian Bronzes*, pl. XIV,—"This figure is from a temple in Tanjore and may be dated about the 12th century. In the image illustrated here the deer and *ṭanka* (axe) of the upper hands are missing. The lower right hand indicates the *barada mudra*—in a manner different from all images familiar to us in the North. The *mudrā* delineated in the lower left hand, though not suggested in the verse quoted, is evidently the *āliṅgana mudrā*—the posture of embrace. This is con-firmed by another text, too much mutilated to be quoted here, which says—"Debyāliṅgitabāmahasta," i.e., embracing the goddess by his left hand."

[4] Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, p. 315-16 ; Krishna Sastri, *South Indian images*, fig. 87.

that the lower right is in position to hold an arrow and the lower left to hold a bow. This should be the correct form of Śiva as *Kirātārjunamūrti*. The upper hands are also in position to hold their emblems, the emblems being not shown. Viewed against the background of the two inscriptions in the Tanjore temple referring to a *Kirātārjuna-devar* of the temple, the probability receives strength though one may expect the lower left hand of the image under study to be raised sufficiently high as in the Tiruveṭkalam specimen to remove any likely application of the details to Vīṇādhara-Dakṣiṇā-mūrti, another form of Śiva.[1] Representations of Śiva as *Kirāta* with the left hand meant to hold the bow not raised as high as in the Tiruveṭkalam image but sufficiently lowered to the level of the nipples as in the stone relief from Tiruccengattangudi where all doubts are removed by actually showing the bow[2] itself to the level of the shoulder as in Tirutturaipundi[3] where the god is actually in *Kirāta-veṣa*, with moustache, beard etc., and to a level below the nipples as in the Chidambaram temple relief are also known. Krishna Sastri's identification of the Tanjore copper image as *Kirātārjunamūṛti* will thus be seen to stand on the grounds of

1. iconographic texts,
2. find place being a Śiva temple in Tanjore city
3. probable reference to it in two inscriptions in the great temple at Tanjore itself and
4. the *kaṭaka* pose of the two hands meant for bow and arrow being similarly represented elsewhere in cases of undoubted identification as *Kirātārjuna-mūrti*.

The find of such a specimen of *Kirātārjunamūrti* of copper, in a less known temple in the vicinity of the big temple of Rājarājeśvara, in the circumstances noticed by Krishna Sastri and the mention in two of the inscriptions in the big temple itself of an image of *Kirātārjunadevar* appear to justify Krishna Sastri's identification of the image as possibly from the

[1] Rene Grousset, *The Civilization of the East-India*, fig. 91 ; Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pls. lxxx, lxxxi, pp. 289-292.

[2] Gopinatha Rao, *Ibid.*, pl. LII, fig. 1.

[3] See above, page 96.

big temple. All the four hands of the image are as originally designed, *i.e.*, in position to hold the respective contents. In all probability this image was removed from its original abode when the big temple fell into disuse and suffered periodical eclipse of its popularity. On grounds of style the image can fall during the reign of Rājendra I (1012-1044) or of his father Rājarāja I (985-1014) who built the great temple of Tanjore.

Anticipating the occurrence of Arjuna's story in stone relief on the walls of the big temple, the writer made a systematic search for some years and was rewarded in 1944. The story of Arjuna finds its due and prominent place on the right side of the second *Gopuram* before we enter the inner enclosure of the temple from the east. A relief, $8' \times 5\frac{1}{3}'$ has been built into the eastern wall of this *Gopuram* and the story has been worked into it in the manner of separate panels going in four horizontal rows (Pl. VIII). The whole was smeared with a thick coating of white wash and lime, a circumstance that perhaps prevented its being noticed by earlier writers.[1] From the way that the panels have been pieced together in the relief (plate VIII) we have to deduce that the carved stones probably belonged to an earlier local edifice or temple which being in ruins, were utilised by the architects of Rājarāja I while building the great temple. This will become increasingly clear when we examine the sides of the balustrade on the southern wing of the *Vimāna* where scenes from the Buddha's life such as the Buddha's *Sambodhi* under the *bodhi tree,* clearly out of context and out of proportion to the rest of the sculptural wealth on the *Vimāna's* walls can yet be noticed as built into the edifice. The explanation in both cases is that Rājarāja's architects did not like to throw them away, obviously because they were important in the popular eye as belonging to old local temples and hence sacred and also because of their subject matter. Indeed it would amount to sacrilege to throw them away.

The story is mainly after the *Mahābhārata* version though one or two details are better explained by a reference to that of Bhāravi as we

[1] Better luck attended the present writer who in 1944 removed the overlying coating scrupulously and found himself more than rewarded by the discovery of the *Kirātārjuna* scenes on which he read a paper at the 13th All-India Oriental Conference, October 1946. See T. N. Ramachandran, *Kirātārjuna panel from the Great temple at Tanjore*, p. 64. (*Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*, Nagpur, 1946).



shall see presently. Two panels, one of the 1st row and another on the 2nd row (from top), have been indifferently fixed and this suggests that the arrangement was perhaps an after-thought occasioned by some missing or broken pieces. Except for these two panels the rest has been arranged with care not to disturb the course of the story.

At either end of the top row are two pairs of sages (*ṛṣis*) face to face engaged in some discussion. The pair on the extreme right end may represent Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (Vyāsa) visiting Dvaitavana and advising Dharmaputra to set Arjuna on the mission of pleasing Indra with a view to obtain *vijaya*. The other pair on the left end may represent Arjuna with overgrown beard and *jaṭās* due to penance (*vrata*) and Indra in the disguise of an old sage come to test his son's strength (*niyamasthiratā*)[1]. The pseudo-*muni's* promise to Arjuna that he will obtain *mokṣa* on the hill where he was engaged in his *tapas*[2] provoked Arjuna into an emphatic protest that he was not after *mokṣa* as his penance was mistaken to read but for removing from his heart the "arrow of disgrace" with the help of Indra.[3] Thus in the relief the pseudo-*muni* is shown leaning forward in the attitude of pressing his point, *viz.*, promise of *mokṣa*, on an unwilling or indifferent sage on the extreme left, who in all probability is Arjuna. The indifference is indicated by turning the face away from the speaker and to the spectator, while his left hand is in a pose suggesting indifference (*"fie"*) or protest to his accoster's promise and advice. According to Bhāravi Arjuna resents the advice of the pseudo-*muni* and gives him an admonition as follows:—

Na jñātaṁ tāta yatnasya paurvāparyam=amuṣyate|

Śāsitum yena māṁ dharmaṁ munibhis-tulyaṁ-icchasi||42||

Translation :

"Well, old Sir ! The antecedents and the results [or the history] of my present action (*tapas*) are not known to you, yet you come forward with your advice that my conduct and observance must be similar to that of sages (*munis*) whose end is *mokṣa*."

[1] Bhāravi, *Kirātārjunīya*, 11th *sarga*, v. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, V. 36.
[3] *Ibid.*, V. 79.

Arjuna's seeming protest to Indra's talks on *mokṣa-dharma* is the obvious explanation of the face of Arjuna which is shown fully to the spectator and his left hand with the back of its palm shown to the pseudo-sage. Behind this pair the stone is broken but what remains shows a raised arm against the background of the stump of a tree. Between the two pairs of sages are the figures of eight divine beings, each with left hand held against the breast and the right hand raised in *vismaya* as in wonder or praise (*stava*). All the eight are turned towards the tree stump and the broken part around it. The first figure in the group of eight, wears a *kirīṭamakuṭa*. Is he Indra who, discarding the *muni-veṣa*, appeared before his son in his real form and placing him in the pose appropriate to please Śiva by penance, joins the resultant applause from the *aṣṭa-dikpālas* (including himself)? That the standing figures showing *vismaya* or wonder or praise (*stava*) are eight in number is more than a coincidence. The broken part probably contained Arjuna's figure in front of a tree[1].

The second row shows Kailāsa where Śiva is seated with Umā behind him and a *pramatha-gaṇa* standing in front. Śiva's left leg is laid vertically (*utkaṭika*) on the seat while his right leg is stretched elegantly upto the knee and then hangs down the slope of the seat. His locks of hair are braided and arranged fan-wise as in Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Bhikṣāṭana images of Śiva[2]. The seated pose of Śiva and fan-wise arrangement of the hair is as in Pallava sculptures of the Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñcīpuram of the Rājasiṁha period (8th century A.D.)[3]. The god is shown with four hands, the back right with axe, the back left with antelope, the front left stretched in ease in *mahārājalīlā* pose on the raised left knee as in Pallava sculptures[4] and the front right elegantly bent and its elbow resting on the left knee of Umā, who is seated behind him on the rocky pedestal with her legs exactly as her lord's. Umā's seated pose and anatomical delineation is similar to the shape of Umā found in Somāskanda sculptures from Mahābalipuram of the Māmalla period (7th century A.D.).[5] Even the *karaṇḍa-*

[1] For the occurrence of the tree see Lepākṣi, Chandimau, Bhuvanesvar, above pp. 46, 17, 28.

[2] Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, pl. lxxii, fig. 2, lxxiii, lxxiv, fig. 2, lxxv, fig. 1, lxxvii-lxxviii, lxxxvi, fig. 2, lxxxvii, fig. 2, lxxiii.

[3] *Ibid.*, pl. lxxvii, lxxviii.

[4] *Ibid.*, pl. lxxviii.

[5] Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part II, pl. xvi, fig. (c).

makuṭa, the *patra-kuṇḍalas*, the breasts and the waist and the *yajñopavīta* are alike in both the Umās. But an elaborate waist-girdle, an undergarment in ripples extending to her ankles and *pādasara* on the foot are additional decorative details in the Tanjore relief which would give to it a date later than that of Mahābalipuram. The striking resemblance between Śiva and Umā of the Tanjore relief with the Śiva of Kailāsanātha temple relief (8th century A.D.) and the Umā of Mahābalipuram Somāskanda relief (7th century A.D.) is not accidental. It only proves that the earlier edifice at Tanjore, the ruins of which constituted the relief under study, belonged perhaps to the Rājasiṁha period of Pallava Architecture and sculpture (800 A.D.). It was remarked that Śiva's lower right hand is adjusted so very elegantly on Umā's inviting left knee as to recall Bhāravi's expression "sparśa-sukha", the pleasure of touch which Śiva experienced.[1] True that the bull of Śiva that Bhāravi refers to in his description is missing here. But Bhāravi's suggestion that Śiva is experiencing the "pleasure of touch" (*sparśa-sukha*) as though his hand was in contact with Umā's breast is the obvious spirit of our relief where the sculptor has succeeded in giving expression to the idea of *sparśa-sukha* by actually showing Śiva's contact with Umā in the manner of resting his elbow on her knee, instead of on his bull.

In front of Śiva and Umā seated on Kailāsa as described above, stands a *gaṇa* holding by both hands a bent staff-like object horizontally as though carrying or offering. To the left of the *gaṇa* stands Arjuna with hands folded in worship (*añjali*). This makes the scene clear. Śiva with Umā on Kailāsa (Kailāsanātha) is the form in which Arjuna beheld Śiva when the latter gave him *divyacakṣus* to behold him, after having tried his skill in archery etc. Thus what the *gaṇa* holds is apparently the *Pāśupatāstra*, which Śiva offers to Arjuna. And Arjuna, with hands in *añjali*, is in a spirit of expectation to receive it and full of gratitude to Śiva, the donor. The *gaṇa* standing between Arjuna and Śiva is as in Mahābalipuram and Chaṇḍimau,[2] and stands in all probability for the *Pāśupatāstra* in its god-

[1] Bhāravi, 12th *sarga*, v. 20.
Kakuḍe vṛṣasya kṛtabāhum=akṛśapariṇāhaśālinī |
Sparśasukham = anubhavantam = Umākucayugma = maṇḍala ivārdracandane ||

[2] See above pp. 20, 81.

like form.[1] Behind Arjuna stand in a row five persons in various attitudes of applause and reverence for the scene relating to the award of the *pāśupatāstra* to Arjuna. The person nearmost to Arjuna is engaged in praise (*stava*) with his right hand raised in *vismaya*. The next two are in a pose of worship with hands folded in *añjali*. And the remaining two are also praising the event they behold by raising their right hand in *vismaya* or *stava*. Indeed one of the last pair, who stands at the extreme right end, carries in addition a *vīṇā* or lute in his left hand and appears to have a beard. Is he one of the divine musicians and if so does the beard suggest Nārada?

The occurrence of the final event in the middle of the 2nd row proves the fact stressed above that the present relief is of several pieces from an earlier ruined edifice joined together indifferently as the available pieces would fit into the space reserved for the entire relief. We also notice that the level of the Kailāsa panel and of another piece below it depicting "the fight between the *Kirāta* and Arjuna" is not continuous with the rest of the rows.

Behind Kailāsa, where we saw Śiva and Umā seated, a man and woman are depicted as walking towards the left. The man holds a bow in his left hand while his right hand hangs down. The woman follows him with a child on her left hip. The two are Śiva and Umā in the disguise of the hunter and his wife. Umā has not forgotten her son, Skanda or the Senānīḥ of Bhāravi whom she carries on her hip. Bhāravi tells us that when some of the *gaṇas* were frightened and some fled at the beginning of the battle between Śiva and Arjuna, Skanda encouraged them and induced them to go back to the battle scene. The simple dress of the hunters is obvious. When Śiva resolved to go to Indrakīla hill as a hunter to test the strength of Arjuna, Umā and the *gaṇas* followed him likewise. Here Umā and Śiva are clad as of the hunting class. The contents of their right hands are not clear as the stone has weathered.

The story is continued in the 3rd and 4th rows. The 4th row which is at the bottom shows from the right four *gaṇas* in warlike attitude marching, one of them actually flourishing a mace, then four wild animals, two of which

[1] Bhāravi, 18th *sarga*, vv. 44, 45.

are lions marching in a row, and lastly at the head of the whole group a boar. The object of the row is to depict a hunt (mṛgayā) in which the game was the boar (Mūka).[1]

The boar's appearance in the bottom row is so adjusted as to make it stand below the figure of Arjuna in penance who is appropriately shown above in the third row. Arjuna stands on his right leg with his left leg bent and raised and his hands raised over his head (*ūrdhvabāhu*) in the prescribed pose of penance. His overflowing *jaṭās* are arranged fan-like on either side of him. *Kuṇḍalas*, necklaces, *udara-bandha* as in the case of Śiva, armlets, wristlets, and a long *yajñopavīta* as in Śiva, and elegant shorts with a loop or fastening betray *the sculptor's* tendency to think of Arjuna only as a *kṣatriya* prince, though in penance. In view of the sculptor's scruples noticed to render the penitent Arjuna with beard in the panel, the two sages at the two extreme ends of the first row perhaps do not represent Arjuna at all but instead, including the others, represent perhaps the doubting sages who, unable to bear the heat arising from Arjuna's penance, went in a body, as Bhāravi says, to Śiva to explain to them why a mortal (*prākṛta*) was doing penance. To the right of the penitent Arjuna, the *Kirāta* and Arjuna are fighting with bows and arrows. Umā, whose stature is small, is watching by the side of Śiva holding child Skanda on her right hip. Her hair in a top-knot, *patrakuṇḍalas* in her ears and her left hand hanging loose without flexion bring out her huntress character. She appears to be eagerly watching the combat in front of her. Of the two combatants, Śiva as *Kirāta* stands near Umā, with a drawn bow in his left hand and his right hand in position to discharge an arrow. Arjuna is similarly engaged and stands opposite to the *Kirāta* with the bow in his left hand. Both stand on one leg (the left), while the right leg is bent and raised as in violent action (*ālīḍha*). The *Kirāta* is comparatively more powerfully built than Arjuna and his hair is arranged in a fan-like knot at the back of the head. A girdle with bead-pendants encircles his thighs. The arrangement of the details of the combat and the style of the archery scene recall the Pallava style that one notices in the Kāñcīpuram Vaikuṇṭha-perumāl temple reliefs, particularly in the scenes

[1] Bhāravi, *sarga*, v.

where Nandivarman I fights with Phaṇīndra and a hunt is shown[1]. The Vaikuṇṭhaperumāḷ temple reliefs date from the 8th century A.D.

To the right of the combatants stand in a row seven persons, all alike and with *kirīṭa-makuṭas* on their heads. The first, near the combating Arjuna appears to be Brahmā. Next comes Viṣṇu, of whose four hands the lower left in *kaṭyavalaṁbita* pose and the upper left with conch can be made out. The remaining five to the right of Viṣṇu stand alike, with right hand raised to the shoulder and left resting on the hip (*kaṭyavalaṁbita*). *Udarabandha*, necklaces, waist-bands and *yajñopavīta* of the first in the group of the five can be distinguished. The stone containing the other four is weather-beaten but enough remains in the background behind the last person (the one at the extreme right end) to show the outlines of an animal like a deer. The deer indicates Vāyu whose vehicle it is. The first in the group may be Indra and the other three important Dikpālas. The idea in showing them all is that "Arjuna's feud with the *Kirāta*" is watched by the Dikpālas, Brahmā and Viṣṇu. As we remarked above, the end, *viz.*, Arjuna receiving the gift of the Pāśupatāstra at the hands of Śiva is the main theme of the second row.

The dating of this relief rests on the parallels afforded with the Pallava sculptures, such as Umā here with Umā of Mahābalipuram, Śiva here with Dakṣiṇāmūrti of Kāñcīpuram, the archery scene here with the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāḷ temple relief and the occurrence of Umā with her child on her hip on which Bhāravi is silent which would appear to warrant, on grounds of style, to our relief a date not later than the beginning of the 9th century A.D. The original edifice on which the scenes under description went was evidently put up at a time when the style (Rājaśiṁha) of the Pallava Kailāsanātha and Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temples was generally adopted, and also when Bhāravi's version was either given up or adapted to other more popular versions such as the *Mahābhārata*. The latter conclusion is obvious because of Umā with child on her hip—a feature and form unknown to Bhāravi.

[1] C. Minakshi, *Historical Sculptures of the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāḷ temple*, Kanchi, pl. v, (c), xxiv, (b).



a.



b.



Saṅkaridurgam

Śaṅkaridurgam (contracted form *Śaṅkaridrug*), 8 miles north by west of Tiruchengode Rly. Station (Southern Rly), in the Salem District (Madras State) is yet another place where the story of Arjuna's penance was popular. There is a fine Poḷigar hill fort here (on a hill 2,343 ft. high), of no great antiquity but strongly built with long lines of fortifications.[1] Between the 3rd and the 4th line of fortifications is a temple of Śiva as Vīrabhadra with many inscriptions. Beyond this temple is a temple of Viṣṇu as Varadarāja Perumāḷ in which was discovered a copper image of Somanātha (Śiva as Candraśekhara) in its sanctum and on its walls sculptures representing the story of Arjuna's penance.[2] Varadarāja Perumāḷ is Viṣṇu, yet an image of Somanātha (Śiva with the moon on his crest) was recovered from the *sanctum* which surprised the writer who found that there were other surprising finds too. In the *sanctum* was also found a sculpture in the round representing a *Veṭṭuvarāja* or hunter-chief (plate) standing, with hands folded in worship while a sword in its sheath rested on his left arm. The spirit of the portrait-sculpture is to show that the hunter-chief is receiving the sword of victory from his God coupled with the God's blessings. The local belief is that the portrait is of a *Kurava* chieftain who ruled over the region around the neighbouring Paccamalai and Kālarāyan hills. The *maṇḍapa* in front of the *sanctum* revealed portrait figures of a *Kurava* chief on one pillar and his wife (*Kuratti*) on another pillar opposite to it. The dress and decoration of the *Kurava* and his woman are as we find in the *Kuravas* even today. The local belief is that these two portrait figures of the *Kurava* couple in the *Maṇḍapa* and the other in the sanctum are of the builders of the temple who belonged to the *Kurava* and hunter class.[3] The Kuravas[4] are nomadic hunters and Veṭṭuvarāja is a hunter-chief.

[1] Some of the fortifications date from the time of Hindu chieftains, others from Tipu Sultan's days and yet others of British origin. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXII, p. 58.

[2] The discoveries noted here are the results of the exploration of the area conducted by the writer early in 1947.

[3] Similar relationship is claimed by the hunting class, the Chenchus of Śrīśailam who say that Śiva married a Chenchu bride.

[4] A female member of the *Kurava* clan is termed *Kuṛatti*. The term Kuratti, more than the term *Kurava*, betrays its origin and derivation as from the word *Kirāta* standing for hunter. Both have the same function, viz., hunting.

Besides the find of the portrait-figures, the temple walls contain reliefs with scenes drawn from the story of "*Kirāta* and Arjuna". The representation of this story is elaborate and in separate panels, not in continuous friezes or reliefs as in Bhuvaneśvar, Mahābalipuram or Tanjore. It was explained to the writer by the priest of the temples on this hill fort that the Veṭṭuvarājas of the locality claimed descent from the hunter-form (*Kirāta*) of Śiva.[1] The discovery of an icon of Somanātha (the form in which Arjuna beheld Śiva when granted *divyacakṣus* as in Mahābalipuram) in the Varadarāja temple which is a Viṣṇu shrine, the find of portrait figures of the temple builders Veṭṭuvarāja and his consort on the *maṇḍapa* pillars of the temple and the occurrence on the outerside of the walls enclosing the *sanctum* of representations of the story of Śiva as *Kirāta* and Arjuna, confirm the tradition that Kurava chieftains who prided themselves on their descent from Śiva the hunter (*Kirāta*) and his Devī ruled over the regions around Paccamalai and Kālarāyan hills.

The scenes from the story of Arjuna are now described.[1] The first panel shows penitent Arjuna standing on one leg (the left leg) with his right leg bent and raised unnaturally enough to bring the toe against his waist, as a feat in acrobatics. His hands are folded over his head in worship (añjali). He does not look up as he should but looks at the spectator. A thick and drooping moustache, beard up to the chest, wristlet, armlet and a long necklace, all the three of *rudrākṣa* beads, a *rudrākṣa* rosary encircling the head, flowing locks of hair (*jaṭās*) hanging as low as the hip, a bow (the *gāṇḍīva*) suspended on his left arm, and an undergarment secured by the *uttarīya* wound round the waist are noteworthy details. At the right hand bottom of Arjuna stands a boar (Mūka) with its snout raised as though it is attacking Arjuna. The pose of Arjuna and the hands folded in *añjali* over the head give to the sculpture an individuality which distinguishes it from the others examined so far.

The next panel shows Śiva as *Kirāta* and Arjuna engaged in an archery duel. Both have adjusted their bows and arrows in their hands and their

[1] Soon after the discovery of these interesting reliefs the writer gave a lecture on them in the *Archaeological Society of South India*, Madras, on 29th July 1947. A short account of it was published in the *Proceedings* No. 56 of that Society.

bodies symmetrically. Both are alike in all respects except in the dress. Arjuna's is an undergarment with *uttarīya* wound over it and central hanging tassel and side foldings or flaps. That of the *Kirāta* who stands on proper right is a waist-girdle of leaves arranged vertically over the loin. A necklace is prominent on Arjuna's neck and an armlet of two bands on the *Kirāta's* right arm (upper). The carving is more a study of the symmetrical grouping of the combatants and their weapons than a portrayal of the combat itself. And this can be said of the majority of the carvings here.

The next panel is similarly composed. Arjuna and the *Kirāta* are shown with their faces turned to the spectator. The combatants each raise with both hands a massive club (*gadā*). The two are indistinguishable but the person on the proper right is perhaps the *Kirāta*. Both have each a thick necklace and two-banded armlet.

The fourth panel shows the two wrestling, standing. Though turned towards each other, their faces are shown in front view. The pose of the hands, the flexion of the legs and the juxtaposition of the bodies are shown in a study of symmetrical correspondence. The *Kirāta's* position is invariably the proper right. His girdle of leaves is evident. Arjuna is shown with a *Kirīṭamakuṭa*.

The fifth and the last panel shows Arjuna as having fallen in the wrestling combat, the *Kirāta* over him with his hands encircling the body of Arjuna and Umā with a bow resting on her left arm standing behind the *Kirāta* and watching the end of the combat. Both Arjuna and the *Kirāta* have their hair arranged in a top-knot. Arjuna's left hand rests on the ground to support his falling body while his right palm shows behind the overwhelming figure of Śiva and indicates *vismaya* as though he is already doing the praise (*stava*) of the God. Pārvatī's attire (*veṣa*) is probably that of a huntress and the bow in her left arm belongs to her outfit. As the subsequent scenes are not shown in the temple it may be appropriate to take the bow that rests on Umā's left arm as indicating the end. It is probably the *Pāśupatāstra* in the shape of a bow that is in store for Arjuna as a reward for his penance and performance in the duel with no less a Being than the great god, Pinākī himself.

The decorative details and the style of workmanship of the carvings belong to a late phase of Indian Sculpture when convention, dogma and high

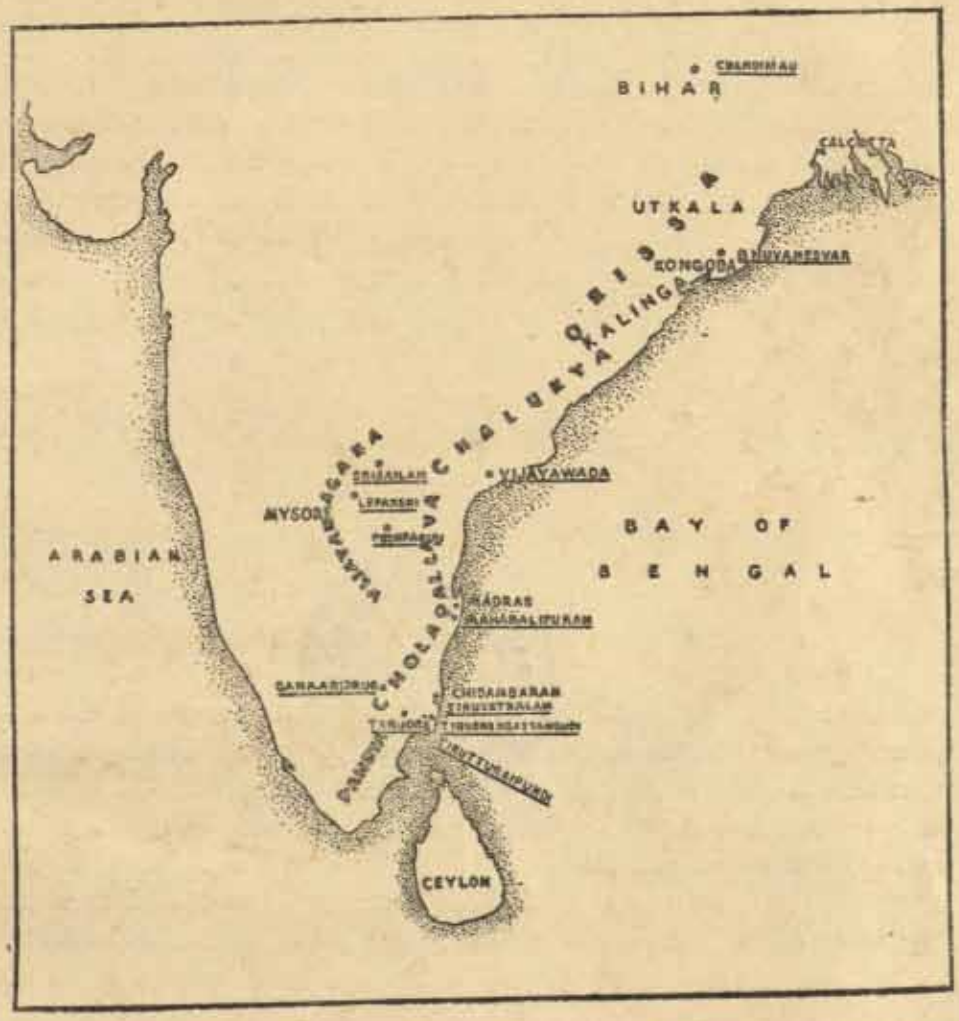
stylisation replaced realism, anatomical fidelity and spontaneous expression and as such the carvings do not come within the orbit of the golden age of Vijayanagara Art. Late 16th or early 17th century may therefore be a possible date.

Māttancheri

The Māttancheri Palace, Cochin, built by the Portuguese in the 16th century on the western sea front of South India and subsequently renovated and extended in 1663 A.D. by the Cochin Rajas, contains on interesting group of wall paintings in the Bed chamber, Coronation Hall, Ladies Bower and certain other chambers on the first floor and on the ground floor. The paintings which are well preserved reveal bold outlines and a technique recalling the Vijayanagara and Nāyak styles as at Lepākṣī, Tanjore and Madura. Room No. 2 and another adjoining room both called *Kovanithalam* or the Staircase Room which have a fine carved wooden ceiling exhibit paintings on their walls, their subject matter being drawn from the Epics, Hindu mythology and Iconography such as Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu reclining on serpent, Ādiśeṣa, the ten avatāras of Viṣṇu, Umāsahita, Ardhanārīśvara, Durgā, Mohinī, the sports of child Kṛiṣṇa and the hunter form of Śiva (*Kirātārjuna*). The south wall of chamber 2 contains a panel where Śiva is represented as a hunter in the act of offering the weapon *Pāśupatāstra* to Arjuna.

Krishṇāpuram

The popularity of the story of *Kirāta* and Arjuna as a favourite theme of artists in South India is further attested to by a sculpture on a pillar in the Venkatācalapati temple at Krishṇāpuram near Tirunelveli, representing Arjuna with a big beard and thick moustache and with a bow in his hand and without *yajñopavīta*. Arjuna is obviously shown here after Śiva had blessed him. The sculpture is of the period of the Nāyaks of Madura (16th-17th century A.D.). Tirunelveli being the southern-most district of South India it will be seen how the *Kirātārjunīya* story spread as a popular artistic theme to the southernmost confines of India.



Map of India showing sites of occurrence of Kīratarjūnīya

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